This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

The Arthur and Elizabeth
SCHLESINGER LIBRARY
on the History of Women
in America

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MRS. PRIVATE PEAT

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Herself and her baby

Digitized by Google

MRS. PRIVATE PEAT

By

HERSELF

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

INDIANAPOLIS
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

Digitized by Google

940.4
P36w

COPYRIGHT 1918
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY

PRESS OF
BRAUNWORTH & CO.
BOOK MANUFACTURERS
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

75-304

Digitized by Google

DEDICATION

Were I not in America, were this book meeting the light of the public eye under the shelter of the Crosses of United Freedom rather than the Stars and Stripes of United Liberty, I would dedicate its pages to the wounded soldier who is my husband, my helper, my confidant—the man who is always and ever "mon pal." But him I will ask this once to step aside for others.

In sincere love and admiration I dedicate this book, humble though the offering be, to the great-hearted daughters of a great-souled nation

THE WOMEN OF AMERICA.

MAY GOD BLESS AND KEEP YOUR LOVED ONES.

May God Almighty be in you and with you as He has been with us of Britain in the hours of sorrow, the days of gladness and the years of pride.

LOUISA WATSON PEAT.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	War and Women	1
II	Men Must Fight	9
III	Women in War—Waiting	15
IV	The Sunday in September	20
V	National Service for Women	27
VI	Soldiers in the Home	32
VII	Women—Enduring	43
VIII	Peter and the Canadians	50
IX	The First War Christmas	59
X	The Invisible Income	65
XI	Spies	76
XII	War Brides	91
XIII	Peter Goes West	101
XIV	Preachings and Practise	111
XV	The Hun As He Is	119
XVI	In on the Ground Floor	130
XVII	Women—Digging	139
XVIII	Zeppelin Nights	150
XIX	Some of the Boys	164
XX	Silhouettes of War	171
XXI	The Second Line of Defence	182
XXII	The Second Line of Defence	197
XXIII	Financial Independence and Afterward	208
XXIV	Daughters of Columbia	218
XXV	The Future of the Nations	225
XXVI	Private Harold R. Peat	236
	A Page of Hints	237

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MRS. PRIVATE PEAT

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MRS. PRIVATE PEAT

CHAPTER I

WAR AND WOMEN

THE first words of this book are being written as I stay quietly in a fifth floor room of a Chicago hospital. Just in the curve of my arm, hindering the progress of the pencil, yet watching the movement of it with a calculating eye, is my three-days-old daughter. And I write of war.

Every time I have spoken to the great American public I have told how every soldier man when he reaches the fighting front fights for some woman. He says, "Mother." I look at my baby and I say once more—"Every baby girl is a potential mother and that word covers the universe of women." Our men-folk to-day are fighting, bleeding, dying for us. It is war

Digitized by Google

and women, it is war for women's sake, it is war for the safety of womanhood.

But to-day it is 1918. This day four years ago—1914—I had no thought of a great war, of marching armed men, of wounded, of hospitals, of love, of marriage, of babies. It is all the outcome of war. Can we doubt—"and out of evil there shall come that which is good"?

May, 1914, saw us 'way back in the old country busy with what only amounted to petty doings after all. There was the rumor of risings in Ireland. I had been over in April, part of March and a week or two of May. I had seen the volunteer armies of Ulster, equipped to fight, if need be, for their ideal—to stay with the British Empire. Some of my own people were in it. Tom Small, my stepbrother, was an active member. Ena, his sister, was almost qualified in the Red Cross hospital of her district. I had been to my old home town and had seen Miss Annie MacKean organising, directing and supervising once again as she had done at previous Fenian risings and Home Rule scares. This time things were more

Digitized by Google

serious for there were rumors of the insidious influence and more powerful money influence of an alien power working among the party opposed to England.

June passed, then July. The British King and government were entertaining the Kaiser's brother. His reception was only a little less magnificent than had been that of the Kaiser himself a year or two before. I remember at that time joining the crowd at Queen Victoria Street one noon when his Germanic Majesty went in state to lunch at the Guildhall. How condescendingly proud he looked and how we simple Britishers cheered and welcomed him madly. Our soldiers guarded him, our flags waved over him, our populace rent heaven with a greeting and he bowed from right to left, I suppose in his inward soul saying, "The fools—soon I shall crush them—soon they will be mine." And still we cheered, banquetted and fêted.

In July of 1914, while His Royal Highness still wandered at will through factories, workshops and dockyards—I remember it was the last Saturday in July that he visited the match

Digitized by Google

factory of Bryant and May in East London—there came two events, the arrangement of a great British Naval Review at Portsmouth, which King George was to attend, and the tragedy of Sarajevo. It was not till war was afoot on the continent and we were still hung in the balance or sitting on the fence for the most miserable three days of our lives, that we took note of the minor happenings of June and July.

We knew a German woman,—as a matter of fact we knew several and liked none, but this particular one was somewhat different. She had been born British in the Mauritius and at seven years was adopted by a German spinster woman who eventually left a fortune to the girl. She married a German—I shall call her Schmidt, her name was equally ordinary—she spoke German, wrote German, thought German, was German. She came in late May or early June to visit her English sister who lived in the house to the right of our own. There came with her her daughter, Sacha, brought with the ostensible purpose of being placed in a boarding school to learn English. Her eldest son was an officer in the German forces, her husband, a

Digitized by Google

man of considerable wealth, had estates and sugar beet farms in South Germany.

Stupid as we were, we did not notice the trend of her questions when apparently with only ordinary interest she asked about the state of Ireland. Always her conversation led to that situation. We had and really have no reason to believe that she was interested for any ulterior motive, but things of this sort struck us as peculiar the moment war came. She began shortly asking me about restaurants at which it would be interesting to lunch or dine. Being out in the world, fending for myself, I had had meals in most of the respectable and reputable dining places of the city.

It was at the Metropole in Brighton that she spoke to the German waiter in her South German tongue: "You'll be coming over to help us one day," said she.

"I am British," he answered, "these many years. My two sons are in the Territorials."

I can yet see her angry, incredulous stare: "How is it," she exclaimed, "that men of other countries become British, but never British become German or other nation?"

Digitized by Google

Surely a question she has had answered since 1914. Once born English speaking, always English speaking and proud of the heritage.

In the second week of July Mrs. Schmidt (which is not her name) received a wire from her husband to "come at once." She left at an hour's notice and the daughter remained behind "to be placed in a boarding school which must be on the sea front."

The daughter was a fat, clumsy, ugly, sandy complexioned typical German. Suffice it to say that she attended a summer day party gowned in red plush with gold lace trimmings—she reminded one of the Lord Mayor's coachman on November ninth. She was about eighteen and looked twenty-four. Her singing voice was the spoken admiration of her relatives and the awful trial of suffering neighbors. But more of it later.

The fourth of August came. It was Bank Holiday, a typical first-Monday-in-August cessation of all business. Crowds flocked to Hampton Court, Kew, Richmond. It was a warm and fine day. I can recall that we were having afternoon tea when we remarked that people

Digitized by Google

were returning much earlier than usual from their outings. Then we noticed the men—each one had his head buried in an evening newspaper. The tired children, adjunct of every outing, dragged behind, but the women for once stepped briskly out and leaned over to catch glimpses of the news print.

There was an intangible tenseness in the air, a tenseness which has increased and throbbed through England ever since. I went out myself and bought a paper—I forget whether it was the *Evening News* or *Star*. As I came in a rain had started to fall and a chill wind rose suddenly. My aunt was putting a match to the drawing-room fire as I reached the hall. The other two aunts were up-stairs.

"Evie," I said, "we're all right—we're going to fight."

I felt myself choking with excitement and yet strangely calm and self-possessed—the decision was taken, we were all in it—all who counted.

"Thank God," said my aunt, and I went to shout the news to the others.

How in those three days we had longed for

Digitized by Google

and dreaded it—it, that menacing thing we feared our then government would not grasp in a strangle hold. It was here. We wondered how the country would take it, and yet we could not doubt. Unconsciously we had always had, not so much dislike for the Germans, as a tolerant contempt. I think that describes the feeling—we bought the goods, for instance, marked "made in Germany," but we secretly despised ourselves for pandering to our economical side by so doing.

Now, with war, we could openly give voice to what we had only half thought before. To-day we still hold contempt for Germans. I do not think I, for one, have much tolerance. I do not think I shall ever learn to think otherwise. I have seen ruined towns, devastated cities, cathedrals thrown to earth; I have seen mutilated men, tortured and ravished girls and women, mutilated and disfigured babies. No, I do not think I have any tolerance in my attitude toward the German people. I do not narrowly say there are no good Germans—there may be. I have met none with the exception of two who had long lived, one in Britain and the other in the United States.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

MEN MUST FIGHT

I'LL long remember that August evening round the fire. There sat the four of us. My three aunts and I—our men-folk scattered sheer across the globe. We have always been a fighting adventurous race—all soldiers or sailors. Was it not my grannie's family who were Sinclairs—Sinclairs of Moneyshenare, that Sinclair, himself the head of the clan, rode in the forefront of his eleven sons, the whole dozen of them mounted on white horses, to the relief of Derry, the time of the siege of sixteen hundred and ninety-eight? Sure it was, and haven't we the history of it written down. There were those of us who had died on France's fields 'way back in times unknown, there were some who had fought through '70—there was a grand uncle who had fought in the American Civil War—I'm sure I can't tell on which side. But

Digitized by Google

I know this that when I came to the States I was very keen to find whether any of his descendants were alive. I reckoned they would be in the East. I got to Boston in the spring of this year and determined to make a few enquiries. The morning after my arrival the newspapers were full—front-page headings—of the fact that a certain man was to be executed for the murder of his wife—AND THE NAME WAS THE SAME AS MY OWN BEFORE I WAS MARRIED! I have made no more enquiries!

We counted up who would go to war. As to any of us who were not already in the services keeping out of it, it never occurred to us.

"There's Peter," it was Evie who named him. Peter Watson, called Peter because his christened name was William John. There were the Ferrers and the O'Donnells and the Haigs. All of my clan on my mother's side. There was Uncle Robert's son, and from the "Small" side there were Tom and Hugh and the William Smalls, and the Robert Smalls, not to mention the Browns and some "out" connections called

Digitized by Google

Hugh A. Small

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Redmond. These were all cousins and brothers, stepbrothers and uncles—we have a fearful and awful connection. It was pretty near a platoon in itself that we could raise. Of course they all went. With the exception of one or two all are "gone West" in the first two years of the fighting. Good boys, we don't grudge you. We are full of sorrow, but so much greater pride.

There were the acquaintances we had, uncountable it seemed, but we never doubted we would see them go and our faith was not betrayed.

Those were terrible days of excitement and stress and strain. Troop trains rumbled slowly by in the semi-darkness of warm August nights, all blinds drawn—the men, going to what—God alone knew, in utter, ghastly silence.

It was then we began to realise war. In a night sentries had sprung up every few yards along the railway lines, the railroad tracks of the country were patrolled night and day. Bridges were watched and here and there news escaped of a piece of steel or log of timber or what might have been a bomb, being found

Digitized by Google

across the railway beds. Now and again a soldier of the reserve who mounted this guard, was reported killed.

The mutterings of resentment at the postponed Naval Review died away. The fleet had vanished into a mysterious nothingness. Winston Churchill was head of the Admiralty then, and there was Lord Charlie Beresford back of him. That postponed Naval Review saved Britain, the Empire, the world—whoever planned it, and the credit has been given to several. Credit does not matter much one way or another these days—it is to whoever does the work honor must be paid.

I went to town every day of course. The moratorium had been declared and banks were closed on certain days. Every one was confused in thought and action, many unnecessarily so. Only the keen young men, and some keener middle-aged ones realised the situation. Whitehall was a seething mass of the "right sort" waiting to enlist. Scotland Yard only boasted one recruiting station and it proved utterly inadequate for the demands upon it. Men stood, a hundred, two hundred deep, wait-

Digitized by Google

ing in the hot sun for the privilege of taking the King's shilling.

Young Territorial soldiers rushed about in service khaki. All had different stories as to where they were going, and not one knew. There was a magnificent state of complete secrecy kept by the authorities; the great British public—which tradition has is "a h'ass" —were wrath at this secrecy and demanded to know this, that and the other, not realising how disastrous public knowledge of vital information would prove. Our milkman expected to cross the Rhine "h'anywheres within the next month." Poor rosy-cheeked boy—"h'anywheres within the next month" he lay under a sod of France—pushing up the daisies as his comrades put it. Eighteen years old "within a month" as his father told us when he took the son's place as delivery man.

The women began to realise something of war next. A dozen organisations came into being for War Relief. Red Cross and the like. Little of system obtained at the outset—the only truly organised party was that of the one-time despised suffragettes and suffragists who

Digitized by Google

have shown their constructive power and worth in a thousand ways since those days, and wiped out forever the memory, disagreeable in the minds of many, of the days of a destructive propaganda in search of a vote.

But despite lack of system, every one was eager, every one was untrained, every one wanted to be doing and could not decide or did not know what to do. The only thing certain was that women knew they had a part in war, far greater than other wars. Mainly perhaps the women whose men-folk were in the regular army. The British "contemptibles." The main middle class British public was largely unaffected materially. Kitchener's Army was an unshattered dream as yet—as yet folk were only clamoring for a Kitchener at the War Office. The main ending to most people's conversation at the time, overheard in train, bus or in the street, was "It will be over by Christmas." A month later, we were saying, "It must be over by Christmas." Now we are saying, and meaning it, "It won't be over till we win."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

WOMEN IN WAR—WAITING

THE "woman must weep" idea of war influenced the attitude of the vast majority of us in Britain in the early days. Those who remembered the South African war were more energetic than those of us who had only tradition of wars and soldiering to help in our understanding.

Women had a vast desire to do and no organised effort for doing. Possibly the suffragists, militants of other days, were those who grasped the situation and, truth to tell, the opportunity first. Few of us actually saw that women's day had come, that democracy and equality and rights fought for for years, were now to be attained peacefully by the very fact that we were at war.

The Red Cross, St. John's ambulance, the Voluntary Aid Detachment, all pre-war bodies, appealed for recruits and got hundreds. Red Cross nursing attracted a vast concourse of

Digitized by Google

girls and women; some admirably fitted for the work and some totally useless. Few realised that Red Cross nursing was not just to sit by Tommy Atkins' cot, smooth his brow, wash his face or even sing the poor laddie to sleep.

"The V.A.D. (Voluntary Aid Department)," said a prominent man on one occasion, "is no more than a matrimonial bureau." Soldiers have been known to marry their nurses and nurses' assistants—who would not be married to a soldier in these days?—but hundreds of girls were put to scrubbing floors in the hospitals and temporary annexes, cleaning the taps, peeling potatoes and never seeing a soldier at all, at all. Many gave up, not because they failed to see the soldiers but because of the disagreeable nature of the work, or because it was too heavy; later they got different sorts of work; others stuck to their job no matter how heavy and many qualified and graduated to more important positions later on, none the worse for a hard apprenticeship.

A thousand small schemes were launched, a dozen odds and ends of war societies, corps

Digitized by Google

and so forth sprang up weekly. The big mistake was lack of unified effort. The work of one society overlapped the work of another. Useful endeavors were duplicated and became wasteful. Every one had the same aim, the same goal, the same desire to help, and every one, so to speak, was treading on the toes of his fellow.

To-day, no, a bare year ago in the States, I could see the same duplication of endeavor, the same waste of essential energy. Good intentions all along the line, but too much individuality, too many separate bodies. It seems almost a heresy to voice it, but that is the main shoal on which the ship of women's work has foundered and sometimes almost sunk completely.

In the dark days of 1914-15, we of the old country were striving to understand, to apply National Service for Women. We knew what the men had to do. For ourselves we were on the wrong track. We were too eager, too aggressive. We have learned our lesson at last and at last applied it. We have found the solution of Woman's National Service. We have

Digitized by Google

joined the ranks and made good, just as the citizen army of the old land made good following in the footsteps of the old regulars.

We spent our time, our energy, our mentality in fruitless, more or less, waiting—waiting for our men to go to the fighting front, waiting for news from and of them, waiting for news of their wounding or death. There was only one thing to be done in those days—wait futilely for some way to help. Scores had to help themselves and their families—they did not know how. Scores of others wanted to help nationally—they did not know how. All we could do was to wait and weary and worry amid the excitements, the alarms and the calamities which stunned though they never diverted our certainty in our men-folks' ultimate power to win.

Those were certainly early days. One can look back and wonder at our stupidity, wonder that we did not see our way clear from the first minute—perhaps some did. To-day, calamities, excitements, alarms have followed thick and fast, yet we are still waiting, but it's a different kind of waiting. We are waiting with

Digitized by Google

sure knowledge of success—we have been weighed in the balance nationally and have not lacked—we have, thank God, found ourselves and found each other to the eventual good of all.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV

THE SUNDAY IN SEPTEMBER

COCKSPUR Street was an interesting clearing house of nations in those days. Leadenhall Street ran it close, but the Western District Steamship offices were within easier reach of the crowds of Americans, South Americans and others who suddenly found themselves stranded in a country at war.

Would the boats sail? Could they get accommodation? The *Nord deutcher Lloyd* offices were a British recruiting station. The Hamburg American had closed doors. Thomas Cook and Son answered frenzied questions with imperturbable calm. "They did not know." "No information." "Come back to-morrow."

A few patient souls awaited the outcome with philosophic resignation and went about sightseeing; others rushed to Liverpool or other ports with the idea of being "Johnny on the spot" should a boat sail. Yet others, foreseeing

Digitized by Google

the immediate invasion of England and downfall of London, fled inland to country places—Stratford on Avon—Edinburgh, or north to Scotland.

Millionaires were content with steerage passages, luxurious personages preferred a deck bench to a "sinking ship." It was certainly an S. O. S. cry. The man in the street, confident in Britain's might scornfully translated it "save our skins."

And then there came that Sunday in September, that awful, terrifying Sunday of heartbreak; of almost despair.

In the haziness of the early autumn dawn we were wakened, we could not tell why, but it seemed there was a distant rumbling, later we knew it was the faint echo of the guns in France coming across the Channel and penetrating the morning quiet of a London Sunday. I went down-stairs early to brew our customary Sunday morning tea. The newspaper was on the door-step. The *Observer* had not altered its size in those days, no one had thought of paper and ink shortage.

I shall never forget the drop, the actual

Digitized by Google

physical drop which I felt my heart give. Our army was in retreat, orderly, fighting a rear-guard action all the way, but rapid retreat nevertheless. I forgot tea and all else and crept up-stairs softly as though a death were in our house, to whisper the news to my aunt.

Then we comforted each other. The true British were never beaten. Even though the Huns outnumbered us ten and fifteen to one, even though they had gun after gun and we had one or two, mostly out-of-date and without ammunition supply, nothing could overwhelm our boys. Tommy Atkins was invincible. It was unthinkable that we should be defeated—impossible that the magnificent French troops should be swept aside and Paris reached. It was all impossible.

It was a lovely September day. The sun poured down through a grey haze which drifted and eddied over the city. Church bells rang and worshipers went in summer gowns to service.

We waited for news extras. We were the daughters and granddaughters and great-granddaughters of soldiers. The extras came out—

Digitized by Google

"British army still in retreat—Germans gaining. Enemy ten miles from Paris—six miles—Uhlans riding but three miles outside the fair city."

And a rear-guard action all the way. A rapid march, skirmish order, an ambush, an hour, half an hour's delay of the enemy. . . a few more English, Scotch and Irish gone to join their forefathers who had given their blood and life on France's selfsame battle ground years before. The French—there are not words to describe the heroism of the worthy sons of Jeanne d'Arc.

That same Sunday afternoon our own German torture began. Sacha Schmidt, the niece of our good English neighbor, commenced to sing—and her aunt, her uncle, her cousins permitted it. In a raucous, penetrating, hateful voice she yelled at an open window and thrummed a piano in accompaniment—*Deutschland über Alles—Die Wacht am Rhine,* and half a dozen other songs in the hateful, guttural rhythm of her father's tongue. But *Germany Over All* was her favorite. Over and over again it hacked its horrible vibrations

Digitized by Google

through the soft September air of an English Sabbath. I wonder how long an English song would have lasted in Germany on that day.

Our windows were wide open as were those of the other houses in the avenue; we sat at them reading the news sheets or just thinking —thinking, thinking. That terrible retreat which was never a rout. That awful rear-guard action. Our boys, British boys, our regular soldiers, our few brave Territorial lads, dropping one by one, dozen by dozen, to the hum of German shells—and we listened to *Deutschland, Deutschland!*

Who of us knew in that suburban avenue but that we were fatherless, husbandless, brotherless, even as the moments went by, and the sun went west as the souls of dear ones may have been travelling too.

It got too much at last. The so-called music of the young female Hun drove us mildly Berserk. We started reprisals. It was my aunt who opened the piano, put the loud pedal at its loudest and banged out *Rule Britannia,* then *God Save the King*—my, how we sang it. The folks opposite took the hint, then those

Digitized by Google

who lived two houses down. The British loyal airs and martial songs rang out high and triumphant. People walking on the street caught the inspiration, soon the enthusiasm bubbled. Almost one could see the thoughts which piled into the minds of the listeners. The news was bad, it might even come worse, but we were British and our soldiers were as British as we. The music stopped. We listened. The Hun in the next house was quiet. We had had a first victory over the enemy. Very ridiculous maybe, very feminine possibly, very effective certainly.

It was some three weeks later that the girl Hun went away. She was sent back to Germany with a bunch of others in exchange for English schoolgirls marooned in the enemy country—and she started her journey in a taxi-cab decorated lavishly with the Red White and Blue of France and Britain flanking the gallant Red, Black and Gold of little Belgium.

I wish now that we had been more far-sighted and less hotheaded, but did you ever see the Irish otherwise? We might have got some interesting items of news from the girl. Al-

Digitized by Google

ways when we met her with her relations, she would remark to us, "I wish zo, me, that you Irish peoples would fight." That alone showed us how the spy system of Germany had produced a line of evidence to prove disruption in the Empire. Little they thought that, for a few misguided persons, Irish peoples would fight and fight to the death, but not one another, nor yet their English comrade, Tommy Atkins. Another comment of the young lady was, "But we have ze wonderful zing unter der sea." The submarine had not yet made its murderous appearance, but presumably its coming was common knowledge to the German people. Later we broke off "diplomatic relations" with the girl's English friends, but before then they had told us that her father had had to turn over all his savings, not inconsiderable, as he was a reputed millionaire, to the German government for war purposes. And that was in 1914. Later still we sorrowed afar for these people for the eldest son—a fine upstanding youth of nineteen—gave his life for freedom on the ill-fated shore of Gallipoli.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

NATIONAL SERVICE FOR WOMEN

WE had hopes of unified effort in the spring and early summer of 1915 when the government ordered a registration of all women. We registered, eagerly, willingly. We filled in a vasty sheet of paper with vague answers to little less vague questions, excepting one—we were plumply and plainly asked our ages. I dare swear there were more women of twenty-five years in England in 1915 than in all the rest of the world put together!

To the best of our ability we described what we could do. Painfully little it looked in cold ink. Some of us had a specialty, and the specialty looked the worse for not even remotely appearing to be of war use.

We despatched our sheets—envelopes supplied—and proceeded to wait. For days we watched every mail. Every time a policeman passed the house we half hoped, half dreaded

Digitized by Google

that he would turn in and demand in the name of the King, the transference of our physical selves to another sphere of activity. For those who do not understand that British people are as free as air in a democratic sense, I would explain that "in the name of the King" is a formal method of proclaiming a necessary law. Nothing doing, however. As far as war work was concerned everything seemed napooed.

Another three weeks went by and then we each received a khaki colored card. There was a number on it and a notice to the effect that if needed we would be "requested" to respond. No call came and presumably our cards are now so much waste paper, or again they may have been used in the complete and well organised system for recruiting women workers under Mrs. H. J. Tennant and Miss Violet Markham.

My number was thirty, but as at the time I received it, I was on work "useful to the prosecution of the war" I did not bother any more about registration or war societies.

It was the girls and women who never had worked to whom the new order of things proved

Digitized by Google

most difficult. "To do, but what to," was the problem, and more important still "how to do." It was hard for them to realise true National Service for Women. It was as hard four years ago for the British woman to see her path clearly as a war helper as it has been for the American woman of 1918—harder possibly, because there was no pioneer ahead of them.

After all what is National Service for Women —to do that thing which comes nearest to hand and to do it better to-day than it was done yesterday.

It was the plain, ordinary monotony of the daily routine which irked our women amid all the turmoil and excitement. There will never be conscription of women officially in my opinion. Women are too fond of conscripting themselves. We have an uneasy habit of rushing headlong at things. We fly to work which may not be suitable to us either mentally or physically.

War is doubly hard on women. Half of us can not do what we want. The most of us do duties which are irksome to us. A few thousands of us are at work which palls. We are

Digitized by Google

bound up in monotony. We are hidden away from the light of publicity; our photos never get into the press with ourselves garbed in becoming uniforms. National Service to a whole host of us has to be carried on in the very prosaic petticoat.

The British women of 1915 were in this case. All around was movement, purpose, enterprise —we were, most of us, forced aside, kept in the home—not by our men-folk nor yet tradition, but by the mere fact that woman's place was not yet in the maelstrom of conflict.

Yet in 1917 there were 804,000 extra women taken on officially to occupy positions of men gone to fight.

That was the condition as British women faced it. Then their National Service actually came to them. Sister women of America, I would beg of you, do not force matters. If, unhappily, this war should continue many years longer, your chance of national service in the more public sense will be yours. Suffice it now to lessen the meat bill, eliminate the wheat ration, tend the war garden, knit the khaki sock, remodel last year's gown and—SMILE.

Digitized by Google

The smallest service is of moment. Remember that. Your individual service may appear to you of little use. It is of use. It is a link in the vast chain of war. You may look on yourself as an atom. Think a moment. Steel is composed of atoms. Suppose there were a flaw in the steel of one part of a British tank, what would happen if that flaw were undiscovered and the tank went into action?

You may be an atom, but you are of importance. You are here at this time for a purpose. Remember it, and be content with the National Service of the hour—the larger service will follow.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

SOLDIERS IN THE HOME

WAR, I think, came home to me most thoroughly—its lighter side at all events, —one Saturday afternoon. My aunt and I were going along Chiswick High Road on the usual weekly prowl for provisions. Chiswick is an old time suburb of London. Hogarth lived there—you can pay sixpence any day and see his house, not to mention the mulberry tree. Horace Walpole had a house on the Mall, which same house was occupied by the late Sir Beerbohm Tree and his wife. Chiswick was a resting place for one of the Georges, I forget which —possibly the third—when he made trips to Hampton Court. Close by are Kew, and Brentford, and Turnham Green where Dick Turpin played pranks—it is an historic district. Nowadays it is prosaic enough. This special Saturday afternoon the usual marketing crowd was out, perhaps there was a little added excite-

Digitized by Google

ment. We supposed there had been a funeral, or a band had passed or maybe a regiment of soldiers—there was always something doing on Saturday.

Soldiers were everywhere anyhow. They drilled in the open spaces of the city. I saw a bunch of raw recruits on the square by Euston Railway Station once, drilling in shirt-sleeves. Uniforms were at a discount. Some of the men lacked an issue of full khaki and marched cheerfully from the waist down garbed as civilians. Neither were there enough guns for drill, dummy rifles of wood took the place of the regular article so sorely needed on the fighting fronts.

But to return to the High Road. We had passed maybe half a dozen vehicles denuded of their horses, shafts skyward and "heeled" up by the pavement, with disconsolate drivers discoursing to interested onlookers. We realised something was up—something more than a funeral. Then we saw an army sergeant, with him a police constable and a couple of soldiers. A bread van went by with a fine high-stepping chestnut between the shafts. The sergeant

Digitized by Google

stepped down among the traffic with hand help up—his voice stentorian, his whole self apparently bursting with the importance of his mission. It was impressive anyhow.

"In the name of the King," the driver pulled his horse almost to his haunches. We sprang to attention. Then we laughed. We knew the seriousness of the situation; we knew the need of horses must be desperate or such methods would not be used, but the chagrin of the driver was amusing as he realised that his horse was commandeered. Then he climbed down to help unharness him while the sergeant entered in his book the name of the owner and other particulars against the time when the government would pay for the animal.

This was war in earnest. We knew that one thousand motor-buses had been lifted from the London street service in the first week or so of the war for the transportation of troops in France—but here was war in Chiswick. If we had only glimpsed another few weeks ahead!

That was when every home became a barracks. It was in Durbin and Alright's, the grocery store, or else Mackie's, the dairyman, that

Digitized by Google

the rumor first originated. Any rumor which originated in either of those two places was pretty certain to be right—they were shops unquestioned for quality of goods and straight-dealing.

Soldiers were going to be billetted on the civilians.

In the early days we had camp and barrack accommodation for comparatively few of the recruits flocking to the colors. As many as thirty thousand men enlisted in one day. Up to May 25th, 1916, five million and forty-one thousand men had voluntarily joined the British Army in the United Kingdom alone. To feed, clothe and house those troops was no small undertaking.

"The soldiers will be here on Tuesday." That was the news one Saturday. We could hardly wait over the week-end. We were not at all clear as to how the billetting would be done. Tuesday came but no soldiers.

"Billetters here Thursday."

Thursday was early closing day in Chiswick. Thursday morning found all the housewives of the district laying in extra eggs and bacon and

Digitized by Google

bread, unspoilable articles in case the soldiers did not come. They did not. We ate eggs, bacon and sausages until Monday.

Monday, a police constable came to the door —"The registration—an order for our carcasses!" No; the billetters. At last.

"Aye," the constable was slow speaking and north country. "Aye—they're comin'—Friday I rackon."

Then he asked how many rooms we had. We showed him our available space. We could take six men anyway—we were willing to house a company if we could.

"Two," said the constable, "because of yer willingness to take more. One woman refused to take any—well, it's by way of being a command—it's the lor anyhow, so we've given her six."

It certainly was the law. An ancient statute was being made use of in the urgent need of the nation. We were glad to come under its action.

But then those were very early days, and the average householder had not realised that the war was his or her own war, just because it was the nation's war. The average house-

Digitized by Google

holder believed it to be the concern of the other fellow. The ordinary middle class man and woman with interests in commercialism, entirely apart from any army or navy life, had not realised in 1914, even in early 1915, that we were ALL fighting Germany, just as every German man, woman and child is fighting us, despite the statements of many and the belief of more that the officials and the Kaiser are the only ones to be cleared out of the way. We have a bigger proposition than that. I think it is being fully realised these days.

Friday came. Thursday night we had discussed what to "lay in" on the following morning. Those soldiers would not know a hungry minute in our house, nor yet would they have a cold welcome. No soldiers appeared on Friday. We ate sparsely of the provisions so that *if* they came on Saturday there would still be plenty. Another Tuesday saw us eating further left-overs. Durbin and Alright (there being a Mr. and Mrs. Alright—Alright-Durbin being the heading to the marriage notice) ate left-overs for a week. They must have. They had provided a generous meal for twenty soldiers, the

Digitized by Google

number they meant to take in—chickens, ducks, ham, sausages, salads, pies.

We resigned ourselves to waiting. Day passed day. We decided no soldiers were coming. Twice troops went through and rested, but only a matter of hours and then hotel and restaurant keepers handled the situation.

It was Thursday, early closing day in Chiswick. We were just thinking of bed—the old grandfather clock in the hall had groaned out the warning for ten, yet we were loath to leave the cheery blaze of the grate fire. We lingered fifteen minutes. Then we sat up suddenly.

"Listen!"

"Halt! Stand at ease!"

There was the rattle of rifle butts on stone, the clank of accoutrement, the harsh grind of shod boots on pavement.

"The billetters!" we whispered to each other. "Thursday—early closing—the billetters and nothing to eat!"

It was a situation, that.

"Tramp, tramp—halt!"

The clang of our own front gate—we didn't give the knocker time to be swung; we opened

Digitized by Google

the door and a cheery faced corporal handed over a couple of soldiers to our care. We signed for them as though they were express parcels. Got a document to return when the boys left us, which same document requested us to see that they were always in by ten o'clock of a night. The cheery corporal smiled "Good night!" We closed the door and faced our guests.

Sturdy, young, tired, dirty—incredibly dirty, two boys of the Tenth Middlesex. We helped them to lay off their knapsacks, discard overcoats and unsling rifles. We brought them in to the fire. They were like old friends who had been parted from us for a long while. It was the same later with all the billetted boys of other months.

There was Thomas—we always called him "little Thomas," not because he was small, but he seemed no more than a schoolboy. He was nearly nineteen as a matter of fact, but his round, rosy face beamed with youth and enthusiasm and happiness.

"I want to get a German," was the theme of Thomas. To get one, only one, that was enough. Poor, young little Thomas! First he was re-

Digitized by Google

ported as missing, then a prisoner, but they found his mangled body later on the battle-field. Thomas got his German, and "got his" 'way back in 1915.

Then there was Blake—twenty-three and a married man. He had not the robust good spirits of Thomas. Blake had faced the hardships of life, had earned his way almost since babyhood. He was a wee bit soured maybe and a trifle socialistic, but a good patriot and a soldier to the backbone. His wife lived only a short distance away in old Chiswick, but regulations did not allow of men being billetted on their own families. It seemed a hardship but must have had good reason back of the rule. It may have had something to do with the payment—families received somewhere around seventeen cents per day per man, at least that was what the government regulations provided that we should be paid. I have forgotten the circumstance of the payment. I am pretty certain it was not forgotten by the authorities.

Blake was transferred to the artillery after he had left us, and later he became a driver. He came to see us after his first wound. Three

Digitized by Google

horses, he told us, had been shot from under him, the fourth had had its head blown off and Blake had received the remainder of the scattering shell in his stomach. It was a nasty wound and he walked almost double and leaned heavily on a stick. I suppose he got better and returned to France. I don't know. Blake passed out of our ken; like so many others—"ships in the night."

But, it was Thursday and early closing. Soldiers were swarming in every house. It might be we could get provisions. We went out. Yes; Mackie's was open. Durbin and Alright realised the immediate need and had lifted a half shutter off the door. The situation was saved. We returned armed with ham and sausages.

"What do you care to drink?"

"Minerals," said Thomas. Our faces fell—we hadn't thought of minerals, otherwise aerated or carbonated waters—lemonade, ginger beer and so forth.

"Take anything given you," Blake admonished the wee fellow; he had seen or sensed our crestfallen attitude, so cocoa was the supper

Digitized by Google

drink. We blessed Blake for the moment, but little Thomas had his fizzy water every night thereafter.

We billetted soldiers on and off for quite a time, in some districts as late as 1917 it was still in vogue, and now I understand soldiers still are billetted in certain parts.

We liked the boys. They were little trouble. They tramped in and out as their fancy took them, cleaned buttons and polished bayonets in the kitchen, whistled and sang, told stories or sat and read when their duties left them free. All of them were full of enthusiasm, patriotism and an entire absence of realisation that they were doing something fine, something big, something great in offering life for the sake of others. God bless you, boys—God rest you, boys, wherever you may be.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

WOMEN—ENDURING

IT WAS in Chattanooga, Tennessee, that a lady made the remark to me, "This is a mental war." I agree. This is a mental war for women. It is also a mental war for the boys in the trenches, though I believe they hardly realise it as against their physical condition, but for women it is wholly mental. The Germans know this and the Germans are acting upon it all the time. They have acted upon this knowledge for these many years.

They spread propaganda, they commit atrocities, they trade in frightfulness. They are gambling on the endurance of women. They do not know the temper of the free woman.

Women are left behind to work or wait—for companionship they have imagination, and the German method is to stimulate imaginations already vivid. They tell stories of demoralised soldiers, of diseased and defective men return-

Digitized by Google

ing to homes once happy; they picture horrors only they can conceive because only they could produce them, they tell of wrongs only such as they commit.

I was guest of honor at a luncheon where a woman made the statement that every returning soldier would be a social menace. She believed her statement, she had received it as fact from a presumably reliable source. She sat there calmly and unconsciously insulted every American mother. The sons of many mothers I have seen are so nurtured, so trained, so guided that though surrounded by social evils, if such were the case, which it is not, they will be immune for the very memory of the waiting women-folk at home.

"More spiritual than material"—how I have longed to convince the women of America that their help must be so. You can't go across to France, nor England. Don't try, don't embarrass the government which is already overtaxed. Many thousands of Canadian women went over; it was all in good faith. They wanted to be near their men-folk. They did not understand the situation over there—the state

Digitized by Google

of congestion as to living room, the condition of existing on war rations—just so much and no more. Many of them got stranded and had to be sent back at the expense of the mother government. The women must be content at home, hard though it be. Yet it is possible to help from a distance.

Think health, think strength, think good, think safety, think strong thoughts of glory, of honor, of victory and you help your boy. See him mentally as you would have him be. Be brave yourself so that he may be brave. Certainly much of his welfare is in your power—materially, yes, but spiritually to greater degree. The government clothes him, feeds him, pays him, transports him from point to point; if through mischance he be wounded the government again, through the Red Cross, cares for him, physics him, cures him. The government is a corporate body—the government is a thing—the government is a vast machine. Spiritually it is helpless, mentally it is useless in helping your boy. No matter how great, the government is without a soul. You, alone, you women-folk, are the souls upon which

Digitized by Google

the boys you send so willingly can depend. You are the enduring all to them.

Your thoughts will aid them, your attitude will hold their balance true, your mental state will react on theirs. You women, working or waiting, by your endurance, you are winning or losing the war. Which? It is yours to choose, and is there choice? It is yours to win.

Self-pity is the basis of the wrong outlook of many. "What shall I do if he is taken—what shall I do—I—I—I?"

What of him? What of hundreds of women whose men are gone already? What of such as a friend of mine whose husband is facing death in France, while she faces at home, three thousand miles from her partner's comforting arms, the valley of the shadow where we women travel to fetch back to light the tiny lives of future mothers and fathers of men?

What of such as this—Mrs. P. travelled on the *Lusitania* on her last fated trip. She had with her her small daughter of almost three years. The vessel was struck and perished. This mother wrapped the girlie in her arms; some one fastened life-belts on them, some one

Digitized by Google

helped them into a life-boat, then the huge, sinking ship turned over and plunged downward, carrying that full life-boat in its swirl. Mrs. P. reached the surface, floated helplessly and then found her child had been torn from her hold. It seemed that long hours afterward she was helped on a raft by two men, one of whom in a little dropped exhausted and disappeared. Later still she was picked up by an Irish fishing boat and brought to safety. Five weeks of illness followed, illness caused by shock and exposure, but more by the tragic ending to the tiny beloved life. This mother recovered; she got back her mental poise, she reclaimed her faith and for the sake of Liberty and Love, which is the world's inheritance, she went out and spoke to crowds urging men to enlist, urging women to work. She told her pathetic story. I have heard her—in calm, courageous tones; her voice was strong, clear. She called on all of us to help. I have seen a huge theatre packed with an audience holding its breath and gripping the seat rails; I have heard the huge sob rise from five thousand throats of men and women alike as the mother spoke her

Digitized by Google

last few words, "And—friends—I lost my baby!"

There is woman—enduring!

Have you heard of the French woman who paced the platform of a base railroad station, keeping step with a fine soldierly youth? Have you heard how she smiled and laughed and waved him a gay adieu as the train carried him out of sight and onward to the muddy, blood-soaked trenches? Have you known how she broke down in the almost empty station and sobbed as though her heart would break? And the reason—the youth was her fourth—her last son. Three others had given life itself to France and France's cause on France's unsought battle-fields. She was sending her only remaining boy away with a smile and a cheerful memory. She—a woman enduring.

Such superbness of bearing seems almost impossible, yet these are only three instances of what thousands have done; are doing; will do.

I remember talking with a young munition girl. She did her eight-hour day, six days a week, sometimes seven when pressure was at its height. With three others she lifted shells

Digitized by Google

from a stack to a wagon, each shell weighing twenty-eight pounds; and day after day, week after week, hour by hour, she kept that up without faltering or tiring.

"How can you do this—how do you keep up—how do you endure?"

"Why?" Her astonishment was genuine. "Don't you know why we women endure; don't you know?—then I will tell you.

"They murdered my Jack with gas!"

There is the answer. In 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917 and now as I write in 1918 women are keeping up. If the Germans had fought fair, if they had been square and straight as far as war allows, no one knows how we might, as women, have looked upon the war. But they did not. They used devilish devices against our men—ours—our sons, our fathers, our husbands, our brothers, our sweethearts. "They murdered my Jack"—not only one, but hundreds.

In 1930, if need be, if through some dark, terrible need, this war continues, then will every woman of every Ally be keeping up.

This is war and we are women—enduring.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

PETER AND THE CANADIANS

THE Canadians, the First Contingent and the first of any of the overseas troops, landed in England in October of 1914. We were very excited about it. We had no definite news as to whether Peter Watson would come with them or not, but Peter came of our own fighting stock, his father a soldier, his uncles and cousins, his grandfather and great-grandfather. It was not likely that Peter would miss the scrap.

Every time I caught sight of the trim, tight-fitting Canadian uniform, I felt a thrill of anticipation. The blue shoulder strap was a sign for us to stop, almost to stare. The overseas boys were magnificent specimens of young, virile manhood. They fancied themselves not a little too. Small wonder when every girl openly showed her admiration. The western boys wore very neatly fitted tan boots. They

Digitized by Google

were reported "rotten" as to wearing quality—that was nothing to us—the trim footgear was a special delight.

It was a matter of more than ordinary interest to see a Canadian, officer or man, it was immaterial which, in a restaurant. First, they "shook" salt over their food all at once. They cut up all their meat, then laid aside the knife, transferred the fork to the right hand and ate straight ahead without a pause beyond breathing or talking. They asked for iced this, that and the other. Ice, for a lot of us, is a thing one gets hurriedly from the fishmonger when unexpected illness comes in the home! And they asked always for "ice-cream"—accent on the cream. One young lad asked for a "Merry Widow Sundae," and was given the icy stare by the misunderstanding waitress.

"Lyons," good old Lyons, was the favorite eating ground of the Canadian boys. Shortly after they came, Lyons' Strand Corner House was opened and sprung to Canadian fame—as well as metropolitan—right away. When billetted at the Cecil, it was somewhat of a joke between my friend Amy Naylor and myself to

Digitized by Google

recognise among the economical diners at the Corner House, the young overseas officers who were registered at, slept at, and addressed letters from the tonier Hotel Cecil.

Then Peter came. He did not write, nor even phone us. He just walked in as nonchalant as ever. The same old Peter, a trifle broader, a trifle hardier perhaps, but slow, deliberate, fatalistic as of old. He had the same old difficulty in keeping his old brown pipe alight, the same husky, cultivated tones in his voice. It was strange to meet him again so thoroughly grown up as we both were since our last meeting.

Peter philosophised quite a bit when he told us things which had happened in Canada. We found from him that it was a country where one could be "up against it" quite as easily as at home. Peter had struck the West at rather a bad time anyhow—just after a big boom. He had landed, for no definite reason, at Berlin, Ontario—now renamed Kitchener; stayed there only a little while and eventually made his way to Calgary in Alberta. As a matter of fact, Peter had found Calgary a cold and very lonely

Digitized by Google

Peter

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

place, the folks in the main alien to himself, or he to them, though he spoke of the wonderful kind-heartedness of the western populace. He told little of Canada after all, but switched away from it to memories of the time he had spent in Essen while in Germany. He recalled things he had seen in the great Krupp city and asked if we remembered how in 1911 he had told us the war with Germany would come by 1915. He was a bare six months out in his reckoning. He had read the indications aright even so early as three years before the Hun took open action.

Peter had enlisted in the Tenth Battalion, First Canadians, recruited mainly from Calgary and immediate district. They became the famous "Fighting Tenth" with undying glory won at St. Julien Wood.

With Peter actually in the house we had now an opportunity to see the Canadian uniform close at hand. It was of neater cut than our boys' and had a straight band collar. Peter wore the blue lapellette of the infantryman, and had he lived would have been entitled to the red and blue chevrons which my husband wears—

Digitized by Google

the honor badge of going among the first. Peter sported on his boots thick embroidery of Salisbury Plain mud, and told us almost unbelievable tales of the thickness and stickiness and continuity of that same mud.

Peter came to see us often. He and I lunched out, dined out and went to a few theatres together. It was with him I was at the Coliseum when there was an Allied display and we bobbed up and down in our seats for a solid half-hour while the national airs of one nation followed on the heels of the other—it was a great game. We could hear in audible tones folk asking "Which is that?" when some unfamiliar tune rang out—after all there are a good many Allies.

Then I met any number of Peter's pals. I only remember two by name—Sandy Clark and Farmer. Sandy was an architect, Scotch born, but with his business established in Calgary. He was killed in June, 1916—I should not have known only Jack Vowel sent me his shoulder badge, C10. Sandy was in the Machine Gun Section of the Tenth then—a corporal—and a sniper got him. It was Sandy who was in a

Digitized by Google

dugout eating a meal of a bully beef sandwich when a whizz-bang blew the dugout in. Sandy scraped himself free and strolled—that is the word Jack used when telling me of the episode —along the trench. Jack was on sentry duty and Sandy sat down on the firestep close by him. He carefully dusted his sandwich of the mud which had enveloped it, then very deliberately ate it mussed as it was. Just as deliberately he filled and lighted his pipe, took a few puffs, then calmly and without emphasis remarked to no one in particular, "That was a close one!" That, being the whizz-bang which had buried him.

They buried Sandy close to the trench where he fell, when night came. Poor old Sandy, he was typically Scotch, apparently slow, with a dry humour all his own. I can always remember his appearance. His cap was too small and he had to keep it on his head with the chin strap down. He looked like a small boy grown up, whose hat is kept on with elastic. It was Sandy who in a word, unconsciously, told us the way of British women in war.

"Do your people expect you?" we asked. He

Digitized by Google

was en route to Edinburgh the first time Peter brought him in.

"Oh, I didn't write I had enlisted, but my sister said in her last letter, 'When do you expect you will arrive home?' They know I'm coming all right, and they know I would not dare come except as a soldier—why, they wouldn't own me!"

It was Peter who first slept on the old mahogany sofa we had brought from Gallina. The billetters were in the house and we had no other room. That old sofa is the longest thing I can recall. I remember where it stood in the dining-room with the silver fox rug thrown across it. Now, in a rejuvenated overcoat it has crossed the Atlantic with us. It is mine now, but never again shall a soldier sleep on it with my knowledge. Of all the boys who slept on it while our house was so crowded not one but has gone West, with the exception of good friend Ben Appelbe. I may be superstitious, but so it is.

Outside Pinoli's restaurant by the Wardour Street entrance—the building ran clear through to Rupert Street—was the last place and time I

Digitized by Google

saw Peter. We didn't know it was to be the last, but Peter, we knew, had a trace of the family second sight. It was unusual of him and I wondered often why he should have kissed me good-by twice—but he did. We are an undemonstrative family. It was raining heavily too, and he had gone quite a few steps up the street, then he returned and repeated the parting. He was on his way out to Bedford Park to see our aunts, and later they remarked how lingeringly he had walked away from the gate when his short little visit was over. Old man Peter—you knew. To-day we know you are well, are happy, are living still, though we do not see you.

Sandy Clark and Farmer were both of the party at lunch in Pinoli's. Farmer arrived late. The names of the others are confused in my mind. Peter stood treat, and he insisted on choosing some light wine—it was Italian—for us to drink. We drank our healths and pledged ourselves to meet at that same table after the war. Never pledge a soldier's return whether in wine or any other liquid.

Some day I shall go over to London; some

Digitized by Google

day I shall go to Pinoli's, and lunch at that same table on the left-hand side, four tables down from the door. I shall lunch alone—quite alone. Of all the young folk of that party, hardy young soldiers for the most part, I the exception—I am left alive on this earth.

The next we heard from Peter was a field post-card. He was in France and well. The last we heard of him was when young Art Chisholm saw his photograph and exclaimed that he had ridden from Bailleul on the ill-fated April twenty-second to the front line in his company, although then he did not know who Peter was, nor ever supposed he would.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX

THE FIRST WAR CHRISTMAS

FOR years we had not had what we called a "jolly" Christmas. We had only our four selves to sit down at the festive board. We celebrated all right, gave each other gifts and gave some to friends outside the family, and "did well" one year or "not so well" other years as to presents from outside to ourselves.

We had had happy Christmases, but always quiet. We had roasted the noble bird, stuffed him with chestnuts, ate him and the usual appurtenances with gusto—rested after our dinner, and the wise two of us indulged in tea later in the evening, taking it as St. Paul of old recommended the taking of spirits! Then we slept off the effects of "big eats" and dreamt of the bone picking of the day to follow.

This Christmas of 1914 was not materially different. It was still possible to buy turkey, still allowable to revel in plum pudding, still

Digitized by Google

within bounds of propriety to procure a bottle of jimmyjohn, even a liqueur was not out of the question.

We did all of these usual things. By the eighteenth of the month, just as usual, we had received our first present—five pounds of Forster Green's "Best," otherwise a tin of tea from old Irish friends. And now that I think of it, there was a difference in that after all—the five pounds came in a paper bag instead of a tin. We thought maybe it was a still better quality than usual but it wasn't. It was war. By Christmas Eve we had speculated on all "possibles" in the way of outside gifts and had been disappointed on most—also as usual. Perhaps the most notable omission was the customary cream given by the dairyman. We little thought how a Christmas three years ahead would be. Turkeys unprocurable, meat unbuyable, fowl not to be had (we call small birds such as hens, ducks, etc., fowl in the old country).

"We bought a rabbit, jugged it and pretended it was hare!" That is what friends wrote us last Christmas. And we noted the spirit which

Digitized by Google

pretended that rabbit was hare. We are going to win on that—the temper of a people which is good under minor hardships such as these, trying as they are, is not the temper of a people who can ever know defeat.

Yet; there did seem some difference in that Christmas four years ago. It was in the air. An intangible something. There was a zest and enthusiasm about us, a tenseness, an inexplicable excitement. We mourned the boys of our family who had gone West, we sorrowed with numbers of friends whose dearest ones had made the supreme sacrifice. We felt all the concentrated sympathy which wells up in the mother-soul of women whether they be mothers in truth or no, for the crippled boys, the blind, the wounded who already moved slowly in and out among us in weary convalescence—victims of the awful Mons, the Marne, the Aisne, and the first Ypres. It was in the October when Ypres was first attacked that Ouseley Davis "got his." He was killed outright. The bravery of his mother's letter to us mirrored the spirit of countless parents yet to lose their all in years ahead.

Digitized by Google

The Christmas chimes still rang in those early days. The menace of air raids had not yet made it necessary for us to curb the call to prayer, nor to stop the services of evensong or at Christmas that of Watch Night. Big Ben himself still rang the hours as he had done for a century before. His great round dial was still illumined nightly.

In 1914 the chimes wakened us with a greeting, the same old bells sounded the old, old message: "Peace on earth; goodwill toward men—Unto us a Son is born, unto us a Child is given." The year of agony and sacrifice and suffering was not yet. We hoped and prayed that peace might be soon again on earth. And yet it seemed as though the angels hovered near, as though the angels were proclaiming the gospel of hope and joy and eternity; the angels who had wept with sorrowing home people in the months when a son was lost, a husband, a brother, a sweetheart. The angels who had miraculously taken form and shown themselves in glory to our sinking heroes of Mons. The angels whose voiceless weeping had swept across trenches where heroes had fallen in life's

Digitized by Google

prime—fallen that others might live. Those angels called "Peace" and there was no peace. There was no peace, there could be no peace for the very deeds over which the angels had wept —there were wickedness and barbarism; there were women and old men and tiny babies mutilated and outraged; cities ruined and churches destroyed—the world made a desolate place.

The women, the fatherless children, sorrowed this Christmas, a sorrow of soul deepness; a sorrow which can not be "suaged" till the beasts of Militarism, of Conquering Might and of Horror untold, be swept from earth—from the earth they have defiled with their machinations this forty years. Not till then, and even in 1914 we recognised it, not till then can there be peace.

It was a happy Christmas, but not a merry Christmas. We can but wish that each Christmas which comes be still happy, even though the Angel of Mourning has passed the home and in passing has rubbed from our lintel and doorposts the red signal of safety to our beloved ones. The merry Christmas must wait its return till the crime of the ages be wiped out; till

Digitized by Google

the Hun of to-day be crushed. The merry Christmas can not be till the chimes may ring again, and till the flashing lights may glow toward Heaven.

The merry Christmas will come with the Christmas of Thanksgiving when Angels and Heroes of War will join in a chorus of adulation which shall reach to Earth in glorious sound, rolling onward in ever broadening volume—"Peace on earth; goodwill to men—Unto us a Son is born—Unto us a Child is given."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X

THE INVISIBLE INCOME

EARLY in 1915, a situation showed itself in England which at the time seemed a problem difficult of solution. This was the question of how to live on nothing a year, a question which had to be answered immediately by hundreds of women faced by it for the first time. And there was a worse question for them to face along with it—how to fend for themselves.

They were "gentlewomen." Women and girls gently nurtured, gently reared, sheltered by their men-folk from all the buffetting of a world which is unfriendly at the best of times and at all times seemingly hostile to the novice in affairs.

There was the woman of uncertain years who depended, probably, on a small annuity and the largess of a brother. The brother was gone to war and the small annuity all the smaller in contrast with increasing prices. There was the

Digitized by Google

woman whose income came from rents and whose tenants, through equal necessity, cut expenses by moving to lesser quarters, or the woman whose houses were vacated by families whose bread winner was gone to the front line and the home in consequence broken up.

There were the women who worked in their homes at needlecraft elaborating articles of luxury forbidden and forgotten in these days of stress.

There were the daughters of soldiers—officers and men—trained to do nothing, brought up in comparative luxury, leading a more or less aimless life of parties, golf, motors, tennis, boating, the unconfessed object of their lives to be married and to continue the same life at the expense of a husband instead of a father. These were suddenly given the proposition to solve of how to live on nothing. They had to find work and work of a remunerative character.

There were the wives of young men who rushed to the colors. The family income disappeared with the family earner, the paid position, or the earning profession. The government separation allowance for the families of

Digitized by Google

officers or men amounted to little as far as living on it was concerned, if the recipients had a certain appearance to keep up in the circle of the average middle class. The soldier's separation allowance to the family of the working class, if I may be allowed distinctive terms in a world of democracy, was rather an addition in many cases, taking into consideration also that there was one less to feed and clothe and that one a man. But the family of the young lawyer, the young banker, the city clerk, the lately finished doctor—those were the women who felt the immediate pinch of necessity, the immediate need of doing something.

The young married woman and the middle-aged felt the circumstances the most bitterly. In 1914 and prior to it, the employer of the old country had an inexplicable but rooted objection to employing married women. I have known married women who wished to return to office work or store clerking for some financial reason, take off their wedding ring and resume their maiden name. It was only then that they found it possible to obtain a position. What the unfounded objection was is beyond me to

Digitized by Google

explain; whether the married woman had gained a certain self-reliance and independence of spirit, whether she was not afraid to "speak her mind" on occasion—whatever it were, the fact remained, married woman help was at a discount in the commercial positions.

Then there was the unoffending middle-aged woman. The frankly middle-aged had many grievances. Her indignation began to rise. It needed to be stimulated. Her grievances were well founded.

The position was this: There were ladies of, say, forty-two, forty-five to fifty-two years of age, anxious to obtain work, some through sheer necessity, some in order to help on the winning of the war. Each one on trying for work was informed that she was too old. I knew many personally in such case. They were strong, capable, experienced in many ways.

There was a government limitation of age, and like a government minimum wage it led in all things. I had much to do for a short while with some of the many Labor Exchanges. Most excellent institutions they are too. On enquiry, the age limit for woman labor was thirty-eight

Digitized by Google

or forty. The Labor Exchanges are a government institution. There was a limit on the ages of women employed through them, yet in the government, in the Cabinet itself, there were men over fifty, approaching seventy in some cases. Army appointments for men went by seniority—the older women were thrust aside.

I knew one lady. She was fifty-two and said so. She had given her two sons to fight for Liberty. They had been her main support; now they were gone she had to increase her income by some other means. She was a widow, had known the joy and agony of birth; had known the horror of parting by death. Now, in the stress of war she was alone, and officially useless. Could she get work? No. She had passed the age limit. She was supposedly unfit and yet, strong and well as she was, she was compelled to live—to live, she had to work.

Could there be others than she more fitted to help on war work? Had she not reason to strive to keep her home together to welcome back the boys whom the good God might spare her? Had she not reason to wish to help the nation to her utmost? Her activity, her ca-

Digitized by Google

pacity for strenuous work, her eagerness and her broad outlook on life were thrown aside because she had lived twelve years longer than some others. An insurance company would not refuse her premium, given their medical officer was satisfied.

We had to help the middle-aged woman. We had to prove that the modern woman over forty was as capable as Florence Nightingale, Harriet Martineau, Julia Ward Howe, who did not stop work and go on the "unfit" shelf when they reached forty.

Until the war, although a problem, yet it was not so acute, this of the middle-aged woman. She was able often to exist, one can't call it living, on a meagre income. In 1914-15 that income was totally inadequate. Often she took in paying guests or kept a seaside boarding-house. After war such means of livelihood became practically nil. The embargo on age had to be taken off.

I did my small bit to help. The then editor of a popular woman's paper published weekly in London was Thomas Sapt. He was reorganising *Everywoman's* and he approached me

Digitized by Google

to run a "Woman Workers' Section." I was to edit the section, write a weekly article of cheer and advice, and answer all enquiries, helping where possible those who needed help to get positions.

It was most interesting always; it was pitiful at times. We received letters of heart-break and letters of stern courage against terrible odds. All were genuinely seeking help and as genuinely we sought to give it. We were able to place many in positions and we were also able to put many others in the right direction for training or for work.

Lack of training was the big stumbling block, few had any idea of specialization, many had even no preference as to activity; most were utterly at sea as to any method of commercialising their own talents; the great majority suffered from an entire lack of any business qualification.

It made a big impression upon me. I saw clearly and emphatically the need for every girl, no matter what her standing in life, no matter what make of spoon (metaphorically) was between her lips at birth, EVERY girl should be

Digitized by Google

given a trade or a profession, EVERY girl should be given a sufficiency of training in business affairs—typewriting, shorthand, something of bookkeeping, how to handle her money, how to buy and how to sell, some idea of method, system and efficiency. Now that I have the blessed gift of a daughter myself, she shall be shown the necessity of learning a means to make her own livelihood. If need be, I would have it that she depended, when of proper age, on her own resources for a time. Anything to give her confidence in her own power, in her own right to share of the world's goods *when* she works for that share.

A large, world-known department store had two hundred of the male employees enlist in three days. *Everywoman's* heard of the circumstance. Two hundred women and girls were required to take the men's places. We inserted a notice, specifying that a month's intensive, efficient training would be given in salesmanship by the Casson Efficiency Engineering Firm, that a small weekly salary would be given while training and that those duly qualified and satisfying the examiners would receive perma-

Digitized by Google

nent positions. We received seventeen hundred applications from needy and utterly untrained women. Some of the letters showed at least power of imagination as to possible duties—others were hopelessly astray.

I had another case of a position to fill—a woman office manager to control a staff of some thirty girls. I had many capable applicants. There was one who in appearance was in all ways suitable. When I questioned her, her own idea of qualification for controlling stenographers was the fact that she had kept house for her father and controlled five servants! Poor soul. Those were early days of war. Bitter experience has taught many since then.

American mothers, see to it that your daughter—no matter how rich she may be—can care for herself financially—not be dependent entirely upon a husband when she leaves the parental shelter.

Take this case: Through *Everywoman's* I had an application from a Mrs. B. A young woman—just twenty-five. She had married at an early age and had five little children. Her husband had been in the Territorial army,

Digitized by Google

had volunteered for France in August of '14, had fought and been wounded. He returned when his wound was healed, got shell shock and had become insane. Again, it was early days of the war. He was not dead, only confined in an asylum, possibly for years, more likely for life. She was not a widow, a widow's pension could not be claimed, nor children's allotment; his separation allowance ceased, his salary had stopped when he left his position at the call of his regiment. He was not dead and insurance would not be allowed. That young woman was left to face the world worse than alone. She had to fend for herself and five little ones—feed them, clothe them, educate them, and she had nothing. She had no relations to turn to. She was a good mother and an average cook—of the business world, of the industrial work she was totally ignorant. She did not know how to look for a position in the first place. Fortunately through our paper, we found her a position which tided over her immediate extremity and later led to better.

Such cases met us every day or two. Can

Digitized by Google

you wonder that I—that we, who know, who have seen these things, preach "preparedness" for our daughters? Can you wonder that we warn and warn again—not that we anticipate more war or greater war—no, far from it, but no one anticipated this war, no one can tell what is ahead. We have lived long enough in the paradise of fools. This is a practical world; it is our generation that must fit the generation to come for any and all eventualities.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI

SPIES

WE GOT the spy mania badly along in the late autumn of 1914. Everybody had it. We had the grand old time "spotting" agents of Berlin's unspeakable one. The police stations were thronged with folk reporting other folk. Many of them had good reason, others went in good faith, but were victims of an over-stimulated imagination. Nevertheless, there were plenty of spies about and every report was investigated.

Dozens of men were enlisted in the secret police. Tommy B., the chief survey engineer of one of our electric railroad systems, was one. I had the honor and glory of reporting to him, one German. We called him "Billy Smith," otherwise "Clubticket" for want of knowing his name, because he belonged to a cycling club and because he looked it!

I had no real reason for reporting the man.

Digitized by Google

I didn't like his looks. I didn't even know his business, nor yet that of his brother-in-law at whose house he lived. I didn't know the man to speak to. He was born in Germany and in appearance was slightly "Hun."

I noticed he took to riding his bicycle to town instead of going by train. That might have been a very legitimate economy, but the real suspicious thing to my mind was his mounting a Union Jack on the handle bars. As a matter of fact in the early days when we saw a flag displayed obviously in a house window we decided the occupants were Germans camouflaging behind the emblem of loyalty. In many cases we were right.

At all events, I reported "Clubticket" for mounting the flag. A beastly German had no right to touch it anyhow. My "hunch" was a good one. In a very short time he disappeared behind the trellis of an internment camp, along with his brother-in-law and his oldest nephew, while his sister, two daughters and younger boy were deported to *der Vaterland.* There must have been something, though I had never the satisfaction of knowing what.

Digitized by Google

Then there was the case of the Japanese. A Japanese went into one of the houses opposite to us and *never came out.* That is absolute fact! We saw it happen. The neighboring householders saw it happen and a Mrs. C. saw it. She was in the Secret Service herself—so she said.

It was one evening. This house had changed hands several times, then had been rented and though furniture was put in, no occupant appeared until the advent of the Japanese man. In he went. No mistake about that; as light appeared at nights in the windows—this was before air raids and lighting regulations—and the milkman left a pint of milk each morning—apparently at an empty house. We know because he was our milkman. The order was given the dairyman by post-card and the bill wasn't paid. The milkman told us that also. The mystery continued. The Japanese would arrive each evening, go in and never come out! At long last a British-looking man also went in one evening. The plot thickened. He didn't come out. We consulted and decided to report. Spies

Digitized by Google

were a certainty now. Bomb makers maybe —we had visions of hidden ammunition, secret meetings of Kaiser-hired assassins. It was a great time.

It was the next day that a woman and a plump, chubby, fascinating baby boy arrived with a plethora of baggage and a go-cart.

The house had been rented prior to his vacation in the country by a respectable Baptist minister!

He slept at home some nights when he had come to town to attend to some church matter, and they rented a room to a Japanese student. Their milk bill was paid monthly.

Nothing daunted by this offset we still occupied ourselves with spies and spy catching. Real, authentic cases were reported frequently, and more than once we knew of spies who were shot in the Tower. At this time the Special Constable Service was installed. These were men over military age, mostly fifty and upward, who attached themselves to the Metropolitan and Urban District Police ranks. They supplied their own uniform, which at first consisted of a peaked cap, a waterproof

Digitized by Google

cape and a blue and white striped armlet. In addition to their own clothes of course. When off duty they had a badge for buttonhole wear and in case of emergency could act, even without the cape, cap and armlet. These men did good service and are doing it still. The regular police force was sadly depleted by Army and Navy Reserve men being called up, and the numbers of younger men who would not be denied enlistment in the fighting forces. The Specials attended to their own business affairs and took on so many hours' duty per week, or came at a call from headquarters at any time. They were excellent spy hunters and catchers.

Mr. A., a fine man of some fifty-nine or sixty years of age, was a sergeant of Specials. I knew him. After one somewhat fierce Zeppelin raid he told me of a smart capture. He, in charge of two constables—also Specials—were on hotel search duty. At this time wholesale internment of enemy aliens had not been forced by public opinion and later action; hotels were more or less hotbeds of spies. There were German waiters sent to such posi-

Digitized by Google

tions for the purpose of overhearing, possibly, conversations at public dinners and so forth among high placed personages — conversations where a word or two to the understanding mind, would convey information of infinite value to the enemy country. Mr. A., with his men, searched a certain hotel at a city terminal of a railroad. They mounted to the roof. Nothing was to be seen. Everything was still, dark and to all seeming safe. The aircraft was manœuvering almost overhead, but no bombs were dropping at the moment. The three men descended again. On the second floor one of them hesitated and stopped.

"I think we'll go back to the roof, sir," he suggested to my friend, "I'm not happy about it."

Back they went. Softly they crept on the leads, gently they rounded this chimney and that; suddenly they almost stumbled over two figures crouched in the shade of a chimney side. A huge, motor headlight, fully ablaze, lay between the pair and one of them manipulated it in what was evidently the Morse code, while the other scanned the sky and followed

Digitized by Google

the movements of the aircraft with night glasses.

I don't think either of them saw the sun rise.

We had the hoary tale of "the nun who was a man" in England too. It is over in the States now. I've only heard two versions here as yet. At home we had a dozen, but the favorite was where the nun, garbed in the black habit of her order, was riding in a motor-bus—quiet, unassuming, gentle of manner, sweet of face, eyes downcast and hands meekly folded under her flowing cuffs. The familiar lady (Mrs. Smith's cousin's wife's aunt's sister-in-law) sitting opposite, always noticed the size of the black boots modestly peeping from under her black draperies. They were enormous boots. Then the familiar, usual lady as aforesaid, with suspicions aroused, got up, spoke to the conductor; said conductor beckoned a policeman who mounted the moving bus and heard the story. Presumably the spy catchers climbed to the top of the bus, otherwise the "nun" would surely have overheard. Strange to say that same nun never got down before the scene was set. The policeman followed her

Digitized by Google

—I don't know how he left his appointed beat —arrested her, impounded her in the gloomy barracks. There she was searched and invariably found to be a man. "Just as I suspected by the size of the boots," as the lady was said to have said!

There may have been a spy garbed as nun at one time. There might have been two. We began to doubt that story after the twelfth repetition. Frankly, now I never believe "nun" stories. Yet, they may be true; no one "outside" can tell.

Then there were the actual cases of the man with the wireless, and the building with the supposed gun emplacements.

The wireless man lived in our own suburb and on our own avenue. It was about five houses up and next door to Mrs. C. A man and woman, apparently husband and wife, occupied that house. They kept no servant, and any one who noticed them thought them rather Bohemian in appearance. Presumably they took in the milk and paid the bill. Sandy "didn't know as there was aught against them," when the story came out.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. C. was at home one late afternoon, alone in her house with the windows all open and her greenhouse door which led to the garden. Suddenly she heard a scream, agonising in intensity. She went out to investigate and saw the woman next door with the fingers of her hands pinned under a window which had crashed down. Mrs. C. then remembered that the man of the house had gone away, maybe two weeks after war was declared. She had thought nothing of it. Thousands of men went away in a night, sometimes to turn up again at their homes garbed in khaki, sometimes only to become the subject of an obituary notice in the weekly local news sheet, sometimes an object of prayer at the Parish Church.

The woman must be alone in her house and certainly she was in agony. Mrs. C. climbed in the other garden by the dividing fence and entered by the kitchen door. She released the poor woman, attended to her bruised and lacerated hands, bound them up and gave her a stimulant. The woman was half fainting with pain and fright, almost she seemed distraught.

Digitized by Google

"Are you quite alone?" Mrs. C. feared to leave her.

"All alone—except for him upst—" The woman straightened up and bit off the sentence. She paled and looked at Mrs. C. as though scared that the latter had noticed her broken word. Mrs. C. paid no apparent attention, but she communicated with the police.

They found "the man who had gone away" closeted in the topmost story. His laboratory was excellently equipped, his wireless apparatus in wonderful working order, his codes of wonderful value. When he saw his visitors he could only mutter—*"Gott strafe—Gott strafe!"*

That was our closest spy.

Then the papers came out one morning with gigantic head-lines and photographs of a certain music publishing house. The plant of this firm was erected some few years before just by the junction of several important railroad lines. It was a model in every way. The name of the firm was German in sound and spelling, but that alone should not have condemned them; many an honest, loyal soldier

Digitized by Google

has a Hun-sounding name. Ostensibly to allow of further additions the roof of the building was flat and of concrete—the head-lines ran:

MUSIC PRINTING PLANT RAIDED.

The concrete floors, the concrete roof were supposed to be gun emplacements. If so, the situation was commanding and excellent. There was an uninterrupted view of railway track; there were hundreds of trains passing and repassing day and night, loaded with soldiers, with our available guns, our available ammunition and available extra supplies.

We never heard the end of the story. To this day it remains a mystery; maybe the solution is locked in the memory vaults of the authorities, whether the plant was a spy nest or whether it was not.

It was after Scarborough that the small anti-German riots started. They did not amount to much. I wish they had amounted to more. The British public do not demonstrate easily, even when roused to anger; their methods are usually very slow, but in the end immensely effective. There was more

Digitized by Google

IVAN DOUGLAS PEAT

Her brother-in-law. Enlisted at 16. Wounded three times and still carrying on

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

than one of us who wished there might have been greater movement.

Scarborough is a popular watering place on the Yorkshire coast. It is a summer resort, with a promenade along the sea front; on the inland side are hotels and boarding-houses. There is a castle close by ruined, hoary and aged. It might have been occupied three or four hundred years ago. Bats flutter under the broken archways and birds nest in the ivy. It is a grey old place and eerie.

Without provocation, with no slightest warning, the Germans opened fire on Scarborough one misty morning in 1915. A brace of their destroyers had slipped through the guard of British vessels—the North Sea is a pretty extensive place—and poured shells on a defenceless vacation centre.

"A fortified town—there is a castle there," shrieked the German press in acclaim of the vasty deed, a few women killed, a few more babies and a few less civilian men. That was Scarborough!

"Remember Scarborough!" rang the huge, avenging figure of Britannia on the recruiting

Digitized by Google

poster. "Remember Scarborough!" and men flocked to the colors; but some, with the women who could not go, set out to wreck the shops of sorbid Germans, fattening on the fat of a land they daily betrayed. The riots amounted to nothing. There were a few stones thrown in windows, a few shops overturned, a few Huns scared, a few unoffending folk arrested.

But it did good. The authorities tightened the tethering rope on the enemy alien. There was a five-mile limit set on a man's journeying from his home unless by police permission and the same applied to women. Hotels had special registration, aliens could not go within certain prescribed areas surrounding ports, docks, munition factories, aerodromes and so forth.

Best of all—sorry though I am that my own sex needed the restriction—the net was drawn close and fast around the woman enemy alien. From experience, such women should be given no privilege, no greater license, no further immunity than the man of their species. She is treacherous, deceptive and can use her sex to further the despicable work of her country.

Digitized by Google

She can worm her way into the confidence of too trusting male acquaintances; she can profess loyalty to the country of her adoption and stab it in the back as she sings the national anthem of the nation she hates. She penetrates to Red Cross workrooms and sews seeds of horror, pacifism, of carping against the government, the while she sews stitches and hate into the garments she handles. Oh! most subtly she works. A word here, another there. Her listeners—good, honest, honorable, trusting, unsophisticated housewives, "doing their bit," listen and learn. They repeat and repeat again. The story gathers force, whatever it be. The harm is done, the insidious propaganda propagated and spread.

Watch your enemy alien friend—watch her more closely still if she continually professes loyalty. Once a German always a German; once a German woman always a German woman.

There may be many who are loyal to the flag of the land in which they live; there may be many sincerely working for the soldiers of their new home. They must suffer for the

Digitized by Google

suspicion to which the disloyal among them give rise.

I suspect all without reservation, till I have absolute, unquestioned proof that there is no room for suspicion. I have seen too much of war—four years is a long while—I have learned too much of spies; I have known too much of the machinations of the woman alien enemy.

To our wounded soldiers in city streets when all of us were handing the boys what little luxuries we could muster, the enemy alien woman was there too. She handed the boys drugged cigarettes. When our soldiers came in on short leave, the enemy alien woman met them at the depots and showered gifts upon them, more drugged cigarettes, more poisoned candies. They tried to entice the boys to places of ill repute and there drag information from them which would be useful to the foe. It goes for nothing that they met with little success.

Bah! We are all suffering in this war. Why should we be considerate of the feelings of the loyal one or two?

I suspect them all.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII

WAR BRIDES

"GEORGE wants to be married before he goes—I don't know what to do." A girl I knew slightly half sobbed the sentence to me. "George wants to be married—what shall I do?"

Here was the direct question. I could give my opinion, advice even.

"How long did you say you knew George?"

"Three years."

"Well, marry him—get married of course, and get married at once, what else would you do?"

"But he has to go in two weeks and he will only get two days' leave."

Exactly; all the more reason for getting married and getting married right away.

There are war brides who should be and war brides who shouldn't. I'm a war bride myself, but one who comes within yet a third category.

Digitized by Google

In the old country we had improvident, hurried, reckless war marriages. These have made for unhappiness, quarrels, sometimes separation, sometimes worse. In the old country we had war marriages, hurried certainly, but blessed with serenity, contentment, gladness, though over all there spread the grey mantle of heart sorrow.

A hundred times I have been asked over here by girls should they marry; by mothers should they consent; by men should they ask what the majority of them term a sacrifice.

Marry if you are certain of a grand, a soul-inspiring, mutual love.

No half measures of affection and respect will carry you through a war marriage.

I do not approve of the wedding where the parties have only known each other a week, two weeks, a month perhaps. They may turn out all right. They may not. But if a man and girl have known each other a reasonable time, I would say marry assuredly.

For the girl there are many things to consider.

Remember you are marrying a soldier or a

Digitized by Google

sailor, that being so you are marrying a hero. You must be worthy the title "a hero's wife." There is no man to-day offering his life in our defence who is not a hero.

Remember you will be separated quickly. Remember you will have been a wife of hours, days or weeks. Remember your husband is going into danger; he may come back to you by God's good mercy, but it may be willed otherwise.

Remember when you part from him, in the hard lonely days which follow, to envelop him in thoughts of safety, of courage, of good. Remember you can aid him from afar. Remember you have said "till death us do part"—ward off death by intensity of love, of prayer, of thought. Remember he is your man, yours alone to strive for.

If it should be willed that death parts you, then gird on the courage which went with him to the Mercy Seat. Take up your burden, take up your life and make it worthy, make it worth while the sacrifice of the man who gave his life for your earthly safety, as your Lord gave His for your spiritual salvation.

Digitized by Google

Remember it may be that your man will return to you crippled and broken in health. Gather together the mother-love of your soul and add it to the wife-love of your heart. He is your man; what does the loss of an arm, a leg or an eye matter where the loved one breathes and speaks? What is blindness itself, if you have him near you? You will be strong, you will be well, you will be full of a divine given power; you can sustain, strengthen and work for your mate.

To us as women has come with war the supreme opportunity of our existence. To show ourselves women as women should be; to prove ourselves wholly woman. Woman as she was meant to be; woman as she truly is—not the hollow, artificial, superficial doll-like flirt which the term "so womanlike" conjures up, as against the "so womanly" which pictures the housewife so short a way removed from house slave.

Woman is now a section of the nation and an indispensable section at that. We are a force. Not alone a force and power for the reproduction of our kind—that is nature's recognition,

Digitized by Google

but a force and power in the industrial as well as in the fighting world, which is man's recognition.

War bride, you must love deeply, wholly, completely. Your man may return horrible to see. I remember being one Sunday in the gardens of Woolwich Hospital. A wounded soldier passed by our seat. His face, practically the whole left side had been shot away; later, it would be rebuilt of course, but then a narrow bandage merely hid the gaping hollow where cheek and jaw would have been. Part of a mouth was visible. It was obvious he could not speak; we could presume him fed by a tube in the torn throat. He was watching the entrance gate eagerly. Suddenly a light leapt in his eyes, what might have been a smile contorted the already tortured muscles. He was something to be glimpsed and shuddered at by those who had not seen worse wounds or those who did not love.

His eagerness grew. Then toward him there came a slim, little woman, scarcely in height to his shoulder. He put out his great brown right hand to clasp hers, but she would

Digitized by Google

have none of it. She raised herself on tiptoe, put a hand on each of his shoulders, gently shifted one as he stooped toward her and put it back of the mask-like face, then kissed with her small, rosy mouth fairly on the blue, drawn line which marked what had been his mouth above the white of the bandage. He could only look his love from blue eyes which so lately had seen Death only and now saw only Love.

I talked with the girl afterward. I do not know their name, nor where they lived. Yes; she was a war bride. They had been "keeping company" some little while. He enlisted, went to France, then got a furlough when they married. Three days they lived together and he went back. Six months and he had come to her again.

"He's terrible bad to look at," she finished our conversation as my car came along the track, "but I love him sore."

We get down to the fundamentals in war. We touch rock bottom. We love and we hate. We live and we die.

You may become a war bride and you may become a war mother. The glory of it. The

Digitized by Google

father of your child a hero—is the mother to be less heroic?

It will be hard, doubly hard. You go down through the vale alone; the light fades and the blackness of pain enfolds you, and there is no dear voice to comfort nor hand to guide. But your man is also facing the vale of death alone, and he has none of the joy which is yours.

Should you be widowed before even your baby sees the light, remember the little one is his, a last gift to you. Remember you bear his name, his honorable name as a soldier or sailor hero—the name of a true man. Remember your work lies ahead, the inspiration of his sacrifice must give you strength. You must train your child—his child—worthily to follow in the footsteps of such a sire. It is your inheritance of love.

There is she who refuses to become the bride of war. She is fearful, timid, cowardly. She thinks unduly of self. In war there is no place for self, the ego must merge into the souls of the loved ones.

You do not marry? Your sweetheart goes to war—are you going to stay true through the

Digitized by Google

time of separation—years of parting? Remember already four years of war have come and gone.

Are you going to fret and worry and weary while he is gone?

Should he make the supreme sacrifice, do you remember you are widowed in heart and in soul, but not in fact. To the world you are an object of pity—for an hour—as time goes on to the world you are nothing at all. A woman left behind.

You do not marry your sweetheart before he goes—you have nothing, no memory, no name, no child—all of the things which are his to give you. You have nothing.

Think well of the matter, girls.

And there is the man. He argues it is not fair to his fiancée. He may be killed; he may come back crippled and a burden to some one. Why not to the wife who has promised to love and honor him, to stick by him in sickness or in health?

Man, do you trust so slightly in the love of the girl you have chosen, that you doubt her fealty should misfortune come your way?

Digitized by Google

Man, do you not want to place her on the pinnacle of all womanhood's achievements? Man, do you not want to give her whom you love the faithful gifts of wifehood, aye, of motherhood itself?

Sweethearts, in a world of war—decide for yourselves—think long—think well—love greatly.

There is left the third war bride. She who marries the soldier or sailor who is maimed and broken and weary; she who marries the man who is crippled, who is unfit; she who meets him when he is still invalided and helpless. There are pitfalls for her. I know.

Steer clear of pity. Pity, the sage hath it, is akin to love. I do not know myself, but beware of pity. Pity does not always beget love, sometimes pity wearies and is tired, love never. Your man will suspect you of pity—be jealous of it. Be sure of your love and assure him of its certainty.

Remember your man has faced death and looked on horrors. He may be morbidly inclined. He may dwell on his own condition; he may be sensitive and shy—even it may be that

Digitized by Google

he will not put to you the eager question, just because he doubts himself. He thinks of himself as he was; he looks in the mirror and in his mind's eye glimpses "the other man."

You must be very sure, girl-woman. You must be very tender, very gentle, very patient, very helpful—verily, you also must LOVE greatly.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII

PETER GOES WEST

THE second Sunday in May of 1915 was bright and clear and warm, more than warm—hot. I remember because although I was not working on Sundays then, I went up to town that day.

Telegraph boys always knock, a rapid double, in London. That summons came—it could not have been more than half past seven—that Sunday morning.

"Peter," I whispered to myself, as I sprang from bed to answer the call. We had not heard from Peter since April the twenty-second. The fatal day of the second Ypres battle. We knew he must have been in it because the newspapers blazed with news of the Canadians. Columns rang with the stand of the Fighting Tenth in St. Julien Wood. How they had fought and battled through the night. How they had torn through brush and undergrowth tangled with wire; how

Digitized by Google

they had recaptured the famous 4.7 guns lost earlier in the day when the gas had been put over. How cooks and transport drivers, armourers, blacksmiths and the chaplains even had shouldered rifles and fought to a man in the desperate aim to keep clear the road to Calais and the world free for civilisation.

We had not troubled very greatly over Peter's silence, because men must rest after such black work as they had had; besides casualty notifications are always sent promptly as a rule and we had heard nothing.

But wires were frequent of late—"Captain S. was killed February —." "Major F. was killed January —." "Private S. was killed March —." We knew what to expect, or so we thought.

I said as I passed my aunt's door. "This is Peter now, I suppose." Hugh and Tom were still left, but they were in the Imperial forces and not in the Ypres scrap just then.

The wire was about Peter, but from his mother. She wanted us to enquire at the Canadian Record Office. I went that day, but it was

Digitized by Google

Sunday and the offices were closed. I went again on Monday morning.

The Canadian Record and Pay Offices were at Millbank. The Record Office itself has been moved twice since then. It was on the fourth floor of the main building in 1915. I was there early in the morning, but I was not first. Girls were behind the counter. Women and men were seated on chairs round the bare room—waiting.

It was the first time I had made enquiries at the Canadian offices. The Imperial War Office was familiar—all too familiar ground. I filled in the customary blue paper. The girl took it. She was tall and good-natured looking. I think it was in three minutes that she returned my blue sheet to me. I had put Peter's name, rank, number, company and battalion in the spaces provided; my own name, address and relationship; when we last heard of him and what we wanted to know.

I took the blue sheet up. My hands trembled, I went hot all over, then cold. I could hear the sob of a little woman who stood beside me; then

Digitized by Google

she fainted and one of the orderlies lifted her. Her husband had been killed.

"No casualty reported," I read my paper. I gasped. Peter was safe. It was all right. I sped down the stairs, too excited to wait for the elevator. Peter was safe. It was into the third week after the glory of Ypres, casualties must be through. I got to the telegraph office in Victoria Street, wired his mother in Suffolk, wired our aunts at Bedford Park. I trod on air. Peter was safe! No casualty reported.

A week passed. There was no news of Peter. I went to the Record Office again. No news. It was a Thursday this time when I went. There was a tall, fine-looking man handing in his blue sheet. He was upright, his shoulders thrown back as only an old army man knows how, probably he was sixty; his white beard was trimmed to a nicety; his immaculate hands were firm as he grasped a crooked cane. There was a carnation in his buttonhole—it was a Malmaison. He put in his blue sheet almost perfunctorily. To me it seemed he had come enquiring to please some one, rather than for any anxiety on his own part. Maybe his wife had been anxious

Digitized by Google

and he had tolerantly promised to "look in" at the Record Office. Certainly, he expected no trouble. He was happy in the consciousness of everything being all right.

My paper was whipped away, this time by a little dark soldier. He was a French-Canadian convalescing. He was back in the blink of an eye.

"No casualty, miss!" He seemed eager to give me good news and he spoke before he reached the counter.

"My God!" The exclamation came from my white-haired friend. I turned round. I never shall forget his eyes—piteous, beaten, sunken in their sockets it seemed, they appealed to me —because I was nearest him, I suppose—the supplication was awful. I could not help.

"My God—how can I tell his mother?"

That was all. He tottered. It was no longer the firm tread of the old army man; he reached the elevator and was gone.

"Yes;" said the French-Canadian as I caught his glance, "he has been coming every day—his son was a captain—he was killed yesterday—the news just came in this morning. He won't

Digitized by Google

have to tell the mother; she'll have had the official wire since he left home."

I was crying myself now.

"Funny," went on the soldier, "funny, but mothers seem to take it braver than fathers. The men can't cry; they seem to break all up sort of. Then the mothers seem to go back years in a leap to the boy's baby days. They get a lot of comfort out of remembering his first word, first smile, first tooth, but the fathers, they don't seem to. They shrivel up, seems to me—funny!"

The little soldier turned to another enquirer. I wondered. I have thought of his remarks since. I wonder do parents not *share* the baby days enough! I wonder does mother get more than her share.

A few days went by and then my letters to Peter began to be returned. "Missing" was written across the corner. His mother got a notice and then she had a kindly letter from the senior lieutenant of Peter's company. He was the only officer left unhurt or alive of C Company.

The hopeless search commenced then. He

Digitized by Google

might be a prisoner. The Germans were not very careful as to the notification of the men taken, or as to the promptness with which the boys could communicate with their folk. There was a chance. Then Peter spoke German; he was tall, broad and very fair. We had a momentary wild theory that he had penetrated the Hun lines and would return after obtaining valuable information. We have much reason to thank the Red Cross of Canada, of England and in Geneva for the help they gave. We have reason to thank Mr. Gerard, perhaps the most loved American man in England to-day, and help also was given us in searching the prison camps of Germany by the organization originated by the King of Spain.

We thought Peter might be wounded and possibly cared for by a Belgian peasant. We began to search the hospitals. Men were brought in sometimes who had lost their identification discs and who had lost their memory. That might have happened to Peter. I went from bed to bed in the wards of the hospitals. We went to Convalescent Camps and Homes. Once we heard of some one resembling the description,

Digitized by Google

who was insane. How I prayed I would not recognise him. It was not Peter.

Mr. Casson's brother was with the Canadian Motor Transport. He took a dozen copies of a "missing" notice and pasted them in France as he traveled from point to point. They were stuck on trees, in canteens, estaminets and all likely and unlikely places. Two men wrote in reply to these notices.

Then I advertised. I chose the *Daily Express,* not for any other reason than of the (then) halfpenny dailies it was my favorite. All the other papers carried Missing notices and the *Sketch* and *Mirror* printed photographs of men who were sought.

There came many replies, twenty in all. All from wounded soldiers, excepting two and those men were still in France. It showed the wonderful comradeship of the boys one for the other; it showed the marvellous refinement of spirit which makes men after coming through nothing less than a hell of agony, horror and torture, to sympathise with others in a sorrow and trouble which may be greater than their own.

Digitized by Google

None of the letters held out any hope that Peter was alive. The supposition was that he had been in a trench with two hundred others. The trench was mined. There could be no identification nor individual burial. Thank God for the merciful belief—

A SOLDIER DOES NOT DIE.

For months we searched and hoped. We followed up the vaguest clues. A year later the official notice reached Peter's mother, his next of kin—"Missing April 22, 1915: now presumed dead."

This official notice allows relatives to arrange the disposal of the soldier's property; to make claim to his personal effects if any have been found. To a wife it means she is now, no matter how she still may hope, a widow.

Like Raymond Lodge, Peter has spoken through a medium to his Aunt Elizabeth. She tells that he speaks of a complete happiness, of work in another sphere. For myself, I know nothing of such possibilities. I can only give the stated facts of those whom it is impossible to disbelieve. I hope it is so. I do know that

Digitized by Google

Peter—that none of the soldier lads of the old country, or the boys of America who make the supreme sacrifice, none are dead.

Poor old Peter! Life was a sorry problem to him and we helped him worry. Had our faith been strong as now, we would have left the solution of life in the Hands which know—the Hands which helped our boy pass onward—upward—a Hero.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV

PREACHINGS AND PRACTISE

"CAN you give me some help; can you give me some advice to help me through this war time—this weary time when my boy is gone?"

It was a woman in Indiana who asked me that.

There were several things I could tell her. It was not so much advice as hints I could give. We who have had years of war do not presume to give advice. We retail what we have discovered, through bitter experience, for ourselves. Individually each one has to work out her own salvation in these days.

"Don't worry," I said—"first thing, last thing, middle thing, don't worry!"

"Do you practise what you preach?" My friend of a moment had me there.

No; I certainly do not practise the precept perfectly. But I try. It helps, too, quite a bit

Digitized by Google

to tell others of the bad effects of worry, and some of the ways in which it is possible to get rid of the heaviest end of it.

Where is your faith if you worry? God's in his Heaven and all's right with the world. Do you believe? Then—why? Why the doubt and why the perplexity?

There are light worries and heavy ones. There are those which appear to be given us, to come to us without the asking; there are those we manufacture for home consumption. If worries were marketable, there's a many of us would be rich.

With one exception, no two people have exactly the same sort of worries. The exception is the war. It is a ghastly worry for women. We didn't bring it on. Possibly had women been conducting the diplomacy of nations, they'd be talking yet. I doubt if we'd have patience to write notes. We like to thresh things out with our tongues. A good "talk" often settles many a trouble.

But the war is here and we have to bear with it. We have to bear with the absence of our men-folk in the field. We have to bear with the

Digitized by Google

horror of having them killed. We have to learn the tragic relief of a War Office notice "wounded." And so we worry.

It is difficult to stop the continuous dread of thought. Yet, we must. It is bad for ourselves, it is bad for our dear ones at the front or on the seas. How many times do I say that thoughts are tangible things. Thoughts are active. Everything had its beginning in thought —Facts are materialised thoughts. So, think bravely, think cheerfully. Forget the dread. Forget the worry.

Worry is like a drug. *It grows upon one.* It gets to be a habit. It is insidious. It is dangerous. It is deadly. Worry saps the vitality. It eats up *Morale.* It makes one old, when there should be no age. It brings wrinkles; it brings gray hairs; it brings ill-health. Worry is an invention of the Evil One; little wonder that its seed is being propagated by his viler son —the all highest of Germany.

It may be that by the exigencies of war you have to work, to earn your own living, to provide for yourself and maybe keep others. You worry at the possibility of losing your job?

Digitized by Google

Don't. You are suggesting out-of-workness to yourself. Suggestions frequently become realisations. If you suit your position and your position suits you, why worry—why on earth worry? Why think about it? Do your best in the position you occupy. Strive to do better, but don't worry because you do not appear to make progress. You will realise all in good time. Nothing ever came by worry.

Everything comes to the woman who waits. Surely if you wait long enough and worry hard enough you will lose your work. Forget that you are employed. Work for the love of work, even though war has necessitated it. Forget the pay envelope for ten minutes some morning, forget the possibility of the dreaded week's notice, concentrate on the work in hand and note the difference.

It may be that circumstances arise that your position will close. Look out for another. Don't despair at one setback. If you do good, efficient work, you will get something better.

You may be worrying over the health of a relative—over your husband's or your son's welfare at the Front or in Camp. Why? What

Digitized by Google

help will it be for you to worry yourself ill, in case something should happen to him? Is there reason or sense in making two evils out of a problematic one?

Worry brings nothing good to pass. Never did. Never will.

The war is hard. I am one of many who knows just how hard it is. Yet, I preach the creed of the brave front. Keep steadily on the forward march whether you have any reserves to bring up or not. Why, if you forget the strain on your resources, forget your problems, forget your anxieties for a time, you will find on reconsideration that a quarter, maybe a half have disappeared.

Yes; forget everything, at times. I have heard criticisms on this side about us of the old country going to entertainments, dancing, attending theatres. We do it, not because we are out for enjoyment only. We do it because we must.

Truly there is little inclination on the part of old country women to indulge in "a good time." Truly, there are few hours of leisure. But, more truly still, moments of relaxation must be

Digitized by Google

taken or the best work can not be given, the greatest production in labor can not be upheld. Fixed hours of work when possible, and fixed hours "off."

In the trenches the soldiers are "in" four days and "out" four days, unless when an advance or push hinders the routine. I know of a shipyard where fourteen hundred women were working. They did the regulation eight-hour shift. There was tremendous urgency for the particular output on which they worked. Yet, by order they took their rest and had their playtime.

I met an American woman the other day. The war has got on her nerves already, and on her mind. To me it seems terrible since she has never been through a raid nor a bombardment, and can't have seen any horrible sights of wounded. And here is the cause—she never relaxes her activities in Red Cross work. She goes to the rooms every day and all day, she rolls bandages, cuts gauze and packs boxes; at home she knits tiny garments for little French orphans. She never stops; never lets up. The last time I saw her she wept at every mention

Digitized by Google

of the war. She has used all her nervous energy—she has flayed her feelings to ragged nothingness. She is NOT helping on the war, although she works and toils and works again. She is making a grave mistake. As yet no real war trial, no personal war loss has come to her. If when it does come, as it seems it must come to all, how will she meet it; where is her reserve strength, where is her stored-up nervous energy?

For the sake of your soldier friends relax. Go to the theatre once in a while. We do at home. Of course we never go without a soldier on leave or a wounded man. It is pathetic to see their enjoyment; it brings a lump to one's throat—but, my! the good it does one. It is an inspiration to work harder, to give more, to do more, to feel more.

Always worry, always dwell on the bad side of war and you are in excellent trim to hinder its progress toward victory.

I see folks around treading the streets as though there were a continuous funeral in the family. There is no need of that. More, it is wrong, more still, it is wicked. There is no

Digitized by Google

room for depression in the world to-day. Oppression and Liberty are fighting in the ring. We women who are spectators of the actual combat must cheer on Liberty and cheer the harder when an adverse blow gets home.

In three weeks of war, I have laughed more, sorrowed more, developed more, learned more, lived more, than in three years of peace.

Take a good hold on yourselves. Don't worry.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV

THE HUN AS HE IS

THE German has invented many things, more often he has taken the inventions of other people and added to them, then claimed the entirety. But there is one thing, since civilisation dawned, in which he is absolutely first and will be last. He is the first in war to kill women and children deliberately. He has got this new profession down to a fine art. He does it with precision and exactitude. It is frightfulness. I have seen him at his work. I can speak of twenty-eight separate killings which he has done in one evening, in one small section within the length of three city blocks. That deserves an Iron Cross surely. That, without the countless thousands murdered elsewhere, deserves eternal damnation.

It was a calm September evening. Only just such an evening as England can show; just such an evening as can be found only in London.

Digitized by Google

A hint of autumn, a higher lift to the high blue of the sky, a fleck of white cloud, an aftermath of heat, a faint remembrance of a dusty day, the dust laid low by a recently passing mist of rain. There is a fleck of rust on the tree leaves and a rustling as of winter's scythe busy already in grim harvesting.

The long, island twilight still lingered, then as suddenly seemed to fall into the blackness of night, all the blacker for the absence of the usual glare of city lights. London—a city of darkness. Unbelievable—unheard of. Black, impenetrable, the darker for the bright lights we have known. The Strand a dull mystery; Piccadilly a darker shadow. There is a faint phosphorous gleam like a narrow line by the pavement's edge. It worries the pedestrian. One has an insane desire to walk on the straight edge of it. The same phosphorous gleam comes from a band of white round a lamp-post, a tree, round the fat outline of a "refuge" pillar. It is the prepared calcimine which edges all pavements and streets in the cities. It keeps the foot passengers from straying among the traffic. A red eye glares out from the middle

Digitized by Google

of the deeper blackness which marks the roadway. It is a stable lantern marking a division of traffic.

The night deepens, a star winks impatiently, playing bo-peep round the dome of old St. Paul's, a pale sickle light marks the slow rising of the harvest moon.

Suddenly, with a sweep of light the heavens are blotted out. There is intense blackness above and below. Giant candles are swung outward over the city; they finger the aerial void with a creeping, stealthy exactness. They cross and recross, form a triangle, then a square, flash to north, to south, to east and west. The searchlights are ceaselessly busy. Little white dots of cloud appear mysteriously, hung midway as it seems between earth and heaven. They dart hither and thither like soapsuds blown, or froth from a battling wave before the scudding wind. Shaftless searchlights these—going, going, endlessly each night policing Heaven's own highway.

A girl stepped back from the balcony of a seventh floor window of a ten story office building. She was alone in the long room. No lights were

Digitized by Google

on and she moved carefully among desks; found her own and sat for a moment in the swing chair, while she opened a drawer and bent forward to get some papers. The clock on the desk showed five minutes after nine-thirty. The girl stretched herself lazily, gathered up some books to add to her papers, and carefully as before threaded her way round desks, but this time to the entrance door.

The white face of the synchronised clock set with Greenwich time, clicked a minute. It was twenty minutes to ten o'clock. The elevator boy, exercising up and down the short corridor, whistled idly, then wheeled in his tracks.

"Going down, miss?—Late again!"

His words were scarcely a question.

"Last passenger, I suppose." The girl was laconic.

"Last passenger—"

The elevator gate swung open. The girl stepped to the marble of the entrance hall.

"Good night for Zepps, miss!"

The entrance hall clock clicked a minute. It was nineteen minutes to ten.

The girl reached the heavy oak doors, now

Digitized by Google

latched though still unlocked. The boy secured the elevator gate.

The clock clicked another minute. How time goes! How life passes!

The oak door swung slowly open.

"Boom—whueue-e-e-e-!"

There was a flash like tropical storm lightning—another thunderous roar, another and another.

The girl cowered back a moment. The boy reverted to the natural of his East-end habitat—"Gor blimey!"

A woman ran screaming by the open door. She paused a moment, made a step to enter, changed her mind, raced on and rounded the corner. Another blast—a stupendous tearing, a wrecking, a crash of falling masonry, a grinding of steel joists on steel.

"We're hit," whispered the girl, "better make for the open!"

The boy moved with her to the street. Another flash, a boom, a roar. The pavement rocked, the roadway opened craterwise, a fountain of wood blocks, earth, pieces of sewer piping, a deluge of water poured upward. There

Digitized by Google

was the smashing of glass, the heavy thud of plate windows splitting, falling bodily to the asphalt.

The girl and the small boy clung close in the open doorway.

The synchronised clock clicked jerkily another minute. It was fifteen minutes before ten o'clock.

A trickle of blood oozed in a lazy stream, across the door-step. It thickened, reddened in the sudden glare of a searchlight overhead. There was a moan, then silence. The girl shuddered, then tiptoed across the stain, drying already. She gained the open roadway, the boy beside her; then darted back as a hurtling mass of metal and fire swept downward. Another and another and another. Two still, huddled, ominous forms lay horribly in the archway of the building. The stream of blood no longer trickled.

Again the girl and boy gained the entrance hall. The clock clicked. It was ten minutes before ten o'clock.

A lifetime had passed. Once more the roadway. A motor-bus, laden sparsely, swept round

Digitized by Google

the corner, racing death. There was a flash, a roar, a shriek. The roadway was empty; scattered here and there a few bits of humanity and broken woodwork, with a twisted, sputtering engine. The girl began to run and lost the boy in the blackness between flashes. A something hurtled past her in the dark. A light flashed. The girl ducked, but the round thing only spun the quicker—it had a white side to its oval with spots of red—the side seemed to grin with a hideous mirth.

The girl laughed and the thing rolled solemnly on to some waste ground. The girl laughed again, then cried. Up the street a little way, seated on a taxi-cab was a body, white hands gripped the steering wheel with an iron clasp, the form sat rigidly. From the neck up there was—nothing.

Another bus went by, skidding from side to side to miss the holes in the roadway, a young woman sprang toward the step, faltered, fell and lay very still. She was dead. Nothing had touched her—concussion from the explosion of a bomb.

Great silvery forms loomed overhead now.

Digitized by Google

The girl looked upward. Her hurried run slackened to a walk, her legs stiffened with the inept paralysis of fright. She made no progress. Another bomb fell and crashed, the roadway heaved, split and scattered, fell again. The windows of a big hotel shattered to the pavement; another crash, another and another. A theatre door swung open, a mass of people jammed in the entrance; they pushed, stumbled, some fell, backward and forward they trampled the prone bodies. As suddenly the panic ceased and the audience walked out quietly. One could hear men whisper impotent, hot curses on the death they could not combat.

The girl now stood, it seemed idly watching the fight, the bursting shell high up which was the bombardment of the city anti-aircraft guns. A fire escape went hooting by; some Red Cross nurses with white dresses spotted with red splashes drove up Kingsway in a motor. A woman passed wheeling a perambulator, in which a six months' old baby lay asleep.

There was a blinding flash, an explosion; there was no knowing from where it came; a

Digitized by Google

shower of shrapnel pieces, blunt ends of iron, of steel. The woman's hold broke loose from the baby carriage handles. She screamed huskily as she was whipped up as with a gust of wind in March and blown across the street. She picked herself up unhurt and rushed back to her baby. A man had stopped the perambulator before it had gone a yard. He bent over the little occupant as the mother reached the side. The eyes of the little one were still closed, the tiny hand still lay daintily outspread on the coverlet—a coverlet worked in pink lettering "Baby."

The mother screamed again and raised the child. A tiny black scar marred the white—the marble white of the smooth little face. The mother moaned now.

"My baby—my only, own wee baby!"

The baby was dead.

A sudden cheer rose out of apparent emptiness. The girl looked round, then up. The aircraft had gone from view, searchlights played unceasingly against the black arch of heaven. Another cheer. People were gathering on the street now—a London crowd which springs

Digitized by Google

from nowhere. The Hun was vanquished for the moment; he had fled from the wrath of our guns. Would that one Hun—just one—had dropped among the crowd below. A life for a life—and there a baby boy lay dead.

The girl reached the subway depot. She nodded "good night" to the girl collector at the barrier, paced the platform impatiently, then glanced casually at the synchronised clock. It clicked. It was fifteen minutes after ten o'clock.

* * *

A crowd of people almost larger than the crowds at the Coronation of His Majesty, surged up and down the Strand, Aldwych and Kingsway as day dawned. More and yet more came from the northern suburbs, from the west, from the east end. They jostled and whistled and whispered and anon grabbed a souvenir of shrapnel, even a piece of shattered glass.

Two women in the press knocked unexpectedly against an abandoned baby carriage. A little coverlet, home embroidered, lay half in, half out. The girl passed as the woman stopped and stared curiously. She gently lifted

Digitized by Google

the coverlet and smoothed it over the tumbled cushion. "Baby"—the letters were uppermost.

But there was no baby.

"Was it—did they—?" A man questioned the girl.

She nodded and passed on to her office. The police would let her in at her own risk. Probably the building was unsafe after the bombardment, it was roped off and guarded. As she went on her way she could hear a man's muttered comment.

"Damn them—I'm going to enlist—damn them—damn them!"

Only a Zeppelin raid over London this. Only one. Only the something which has happened once a week, twice a week, maybe four times a week, at times. Only the Hun as he is. Only the kultured German people as they are.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVI

IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR

HERBERT N. CASSON is the man who showed me how to enjoy work; he taught me the honor of honest labor, the pleasure of accomplishment, the merriment of efficiency.

Herbert N. Casson is an Efficiency Engineer —sometime of the United States, though Canadian born, now of London and England and France.

I can hear the inflection, the peculiar intonation which heralds that word "Efficiency" today. It is a word upon which the Hun has brought opprobrium, but Hun Efficiency and Casson Efficiency are two very different things.

There is the efficiency of aggression and the efficiency of progression. I leave it to the Allies to decide what nations are the more likely to be the exponents of which!

I met Mr. Casson in January of 1915, and, to my lasting satisfaction, joined his London staff.

Digitized by Google

Efficiency was needed in England not because we of the old country are peculiarly stupid, but because we are conservative and inclined to be "sot in our ways." We have been striving to linger under the influences of the Pisces age, while our world has travelled onward under the sign of man and outpouring—Aquarius. We were living with the times, yet encased in a shell of our own self-sufficiency, self-content and self-confidence.

We needed a jolt.

Mentally and spiritually the war has jolted us, almost all without exception. Industrially and commercially, Efficiency—true Efficiency, has jolted many and is steadily jolting more.

On one Monday of January, 1915, I had the hardest piece of work to do that has yet fallen to my lot. It was at the Monday Lunch Club, then held at the Holborn Restaurant. Mr. Casson was giving one of his noted half-hour addresses. I was to report his speech. H'm. A verbatim report—huh! Did you ever try to count the bullets one by one as they leave the belt of a rapidly fired machine gun—count them by sound? Did you?

Digitized by Google

I had never heard H. N. C. speak before, I have heard him many times since, yet I have never reported him verbatim—I would so much like to meet the man who can do so single-handed. Yet his every word is clear, his every point the perfection of forceful finality, his every argument convincing, true and indisputable, his every phrase, his every epigram as penetratingly incisive as the pulsing bullet of the rapid gun fire he emulates.

Those Monday lunches became the bane of my life. I had to seat the two to three hundred business men who attended. Each man wanted a particular seat with his own particular group or Mr. Green wanted to sit beside Mr. Brown and Mr. Brown did not want to sit beside Mr. Green. It was up to me to write the table plan, to please all, offend none, and at one time or other see that each man got his turn at Mr. Casson's table. It was a matter of gymnastical etiquette, and left me at my own Monday lunch an irritated bundle of wilting nerves.

The Casson Company which owned the British sections of the Sheldon School and the Emerson Efficiency in addition to Mr. Casson's own

Digitized by Google

methods, was established in 1914 just as war broke out, and since then it has trained nine thousand individuals. Of these only a thousand odd have been women. Women are largely learning their efficiency with their trade, and some have not completely realised the absolute necessity for applied system, for specialisation. We are learning.

Mr. Casson's staff has handled one hundred and tweny firms in efficiency work, and he, personally, fifty-one. These were mostly factories and include such work as increasing the output of tanks, of aeroplanes, of engines, of guns, of asbestos, of army clothing, of foodstuffs. These figures of course are only up to 1918, and are increasing daily.

The Casson firm is "badged." This means that each member is entitled to the special war work badge of Britain, while the firm ranks as "controlled" under the Department of Munitions.

The original home of the Casson Efficiency was located in Empire House, Kingsway—a new building, peculiarly attractive to the Hun airman. We were bombed out on September 13,

Digitized by Google

1915. Later, we were commandeered on two occasions. The first time I received the Commandeering Officer myself, and readily promised the little man that we would retreat, bag and baggage in the space of a day and a half to quarters in the Hotel Cecil. Since then the firm has been commandeered from there and has a new home in Lincolns Inn Fields, which I have never seen. There, too, the *Efficiency Magazine* is published, which is owned and edited by Mr. Casson, and managed now by my dear friend Amy Naylor.

In my almost two years' association with Mr. Casson's work, my greatest pleasure was the "make-up" of the E. M. The long slither of scissors up and down a galley proof, the smell of damp ink and fresh paste, the cutting of a line, the fitting out of a word, the interspersing of one of Mr. Casson's epigrammatic "boxes" and a splutter of ding-bats. The E. M. was like a baby—we tended it and cared for it, humored it and played with it. It is grown up now, a flourishing magazine and one of worth as it always was—of interest to the man and woman of business or the man and woman of

Digitized by Google

Herbert N. Casson

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

leisure who yet are wishful to make the most of life.

Mr. Casson is now a lecturer of the London and Manchester Universities, but his greatest work is still a fledgling. He is introducing an Efficiency Movement into France—battered France—France whose richest of industrial centers are paralysed under the claw of the Hun eagle, France a country mutilé, France whom all the Allies love.

My work on Mr. Casson's staff showed me for the first time the infinite possibilities of human nature. He himself wrote a book only lately and the title is *Human Nature,* but my initiation was not that of the broad thinker or the cosmopolitan mind—it was the human nature of the quite ordinary mind—the humanity of the girl worker, the stenographer, the typist, the bookkeeper, the telephone girl, the office man and the office boy. It was the philosophy of the daily round, or the daily grind as this one or that might take it. I viewed the ambitions, the self-satisfactions and the egoisms of this man and that; I saw the emulations and jealousies, I saw the old pandering half fear of the

Digitized by Google

ordinary clerk for his employer widen out into circles and disappear before the disarming frankness, sociability and genuine heartiness and good-fellowship of Mr. Casson. At a long last, before I left, I could see in the near distance the crowning point of perfect team play, the secret of all success, evolving from the mass of men and women constituting the staff, lifting them from the days of suspicion, of self-seeking, of working for a pay envelope and not for work's sake. I had seen all of these bitter feelings among the staff of a firm on which I had worked formerly. I had seen the havoc it played with nerves and the consequent deterioration in work. There were the "Firm" favorites and there were those who strove to undermine the favorites. There was all of back-biting, of bitterness, of tale-bearing, of insinuation, which was almost lying, and there was confusion supreme in the greater portion of the work—there was everlasting overtime and continuous under-pay. Not till I worked on the Casson staff did I understand "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

At the Efficiency headquarters I met the girl

Digitized by Google

destined to be my best friend, and a successor to my duties, much more able than myself. Amy Naylor. She has rejoiced with me in my happiness, worried with me in my business troubles, laughed with me in our many jokes, sympathised with me in my sorrows, helped me immeasurably in a thousand ways. May all such happiness which is mine, come also unto her.

At best of times the work on the Efficiency Staff was not wildly exciting, at times it was strenuous, once or twice it actually became steadily monotonous. More often it was a series of small upheavals, some one would come in the morning full of being bombed overnight, or most sad of all, some one's sweetheart, brother, father or cousin would have paid the supreme price for Liberty, and we would stand by in sympathy only able to watch the girl bravely take up the threads of her work which was a link in the lengthening chain of Victory.

I go over and over the pleasant memories of Miss Webster, of Miss Ripley, of Pansy Westbrook, and last but not least, George Furr, the then inimitable office boy of the establishment. Before the advent of George we had a man,

Digitized by Google

Wheeler, who joined up with a London regiment and reached France after a few months' training.

Of the male staff there was T. Elson Williams, with his son in the front line, there was Arthur Dodds, now a wounded officer, there was W. W. Attwood, now in King's khaki; there was F. C. Harding, not within recruiting requirements, and there was Robert E. Meadows, of the Yorkshire branch, over age himself, but represented in the fighting field by his son. I do not remember the names of other members of the staff, but they all worked with the enthusiasm of Casson inspiration. Whether it was the speeding up in making chocolates for the soldiers, lemonade for the sailors, or uniforms and gun equipment, there was the same team play, the same thought, the same perfection of detail, the same concentration, the same faith, the same invariable success.

I have never regretted leaving the Casson force, but had circumstances worked otherwise I would have chosen to work out my war work, which like all others of Britain is to the end, in the front line of British Efficiency offensive.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVII

WOMEN—DIGGING

IT was Mr. Casson who gave me the idea; at least what he said led me to think of our work in a different degree.

We were standing at the seventh floor window of Empire House, watching a number of men dig a long, deep, mysterious hole in a waste piece of ground. It was a gun pit as a matter of fact.

"Yes," said Mr. Casson, "yes, this is a war of digging—digging trenches, digging graves."

"And," I interrupted, "digging foundations."

Had you thought of it? We women are digging foundations. Firm foundations. Solid foundations. Foundations of good, prosperous trade. Foundations for increased and adequate pay to the woman worker. Foundations for better work. Foundations of greater and fairer profit to the employer and resultantly to our-

Digitized by Google

selves. Foundations of better homes and happier lives; better children and a better nation.

Women over here, just as they already have done in the old country, are stepping into the world of work, many of us for the first time. We find that men have erected a great structure of labor and trade, but there is a crumbling at the foundations. They built the towers of labor and capital separately and insecurely welded them with jealousy, suspicion, envy and misunderstanding. This has occurred through causes too deep and far-reaching for us to discuss. The fact remains, however, and, now as we women are starting out in work, we must see to it that the foundations of our employment are secure. We want to learn that for world success Capital and Labor must be one homogeneous whole. We want to know that the Capital which makes our employment possible, is not wielded by an enemy. We want no misunderstandings, envy, malice or jealousy. We want to start fair.

In the sudden upheaval of life which has happened overseas and is happening here now, we must, as far as may be, take time to consider.

Digitized by Google

We must not rush helter-skelter into any work at any salary, on any old basis. If we don't care for our own sake, we must care for the sake of the boys whose places we are taking.

When the "Derby" system of "grouping" men went into force in England, I found innumerable cases of women whose husbands were to be called up, almost in a state of panic. I had interviews with several and here is the burden of their cry—"I must get work—I must get two pounds per week—they must take me without experience—they must give me a chance."

In dealing with cases of this sort, we had to analyse the thing. First, we knew only too well of the necessity of work. No one knew it better. No woman could keep her house on the separation allowance of a private soldier; and not very many had it supplemented by half pay from the husband's firm. But she must get work. That was an established fact.

"I must have two pounds per week." That does not appear a monstrous salary in the land of good pay, but it was considered quite good at home in those days. Ten dollars a week did quite a lot. But the government minimum for

Digitized by Google

girl clerks was twenty-five shillings per week, which is somewhere around six dollars.

We had to explain to a woman of this type that she must conform to the salary which she was worth. No more, no less. She could not force employers to give her money out of charity. Only unjust influence could provide her with a salary beyond her deserts.

"They must take me without experience." In some cases they had to. But the married woman seeking work had to remember it could not be obtained by aggression. There were in the early days of the war, perhaps two women to every vacant job.

"They must give me a chance." At first they did not. There is no altruism about the modern employer. He thought of his business first and last. If the women's work was likely to prove profitable then she got a chance, not otherwise. I do not blame him.

It was plain to be seen how all the trouble came about. Foundations were wrongly laid. These married women, so hurriedly faced with the problem of earning money, were brought up short and helpless. Most of them wanted to get

Digitized by Google

positions of control or of supervision. They failed to recognise that such positions demand training, demand to be worked for—worked up to.

We who worked among cases of the sort, could not but see that man had made the initial mistake. He had failed to let the women of this class, for the most part "sheltered" women, get an insight into the working world. These women had to learn first, and from the first. It is very nice to be taken care of; it is much nicer to know that one is fit to care for oneself.

The women of to-day are out in the working trenches of life. We are at the front. We are under fire. We have got to make ready. We are learning the necessity and secret of preparedness. A number of women are working under extreme difficulty, for in addition to preparing foundations for our future welfare in the industrial world, we must earn for immediate necessities. However, women are among nature's chosen architects, we can plan and devise and carry out. In the old country there will never again be such an undisciplined race for a weekly wage. All over the world there

Digitized by Google

should be a combine to force the organisation of a Central Control for the allotment of woman labour. It should work on broad plans, always with the end in view that the right woman shall get in the right place; that the efficient woman shall have no limit set to her earning capacity, that the ambitious woman shall have no restrictions as to the area of her career.

This is the age of the pioneer woman. I wonder who, in every trade, was the first woman to exercise each particular calling? For generations we have heard of the pioneer women who trekked with their men-folk to the veldt of Africa, to the rolling downs of Australia, to the prairies of Canada, to Alaska and to the far West. We have heard of the woman who was the only one of her sex with a white skin in many of the farther places of the earth. I talked with a woman in British Columbia and for three years she had been the only white woman in a district of Indians. Think of it. She had followed her husband on foot through miles of untrodden forest. She had taken up her life a hundred miles from anywhere. She had ordered her domestic life as best she could,

Digitized by Google

with home manufactured cooking utensils and the like. She had put up with hardships and privations. She had endured hundreds of petty annoyances, which to man appeared trivial, but which to a woman were as the pricks of a thousand sharp needles. Yet that woman was happy and content. And why? She had achieved; she had accomplished, she had done something never done before. She had blazed the trail; she had cleared the track, she had done a very great thing;—SHE HAD MADE THE WAY EASIER FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW.

That is a mighty big thing to do in life. Every woman of us who starts something new, no matter how hard it be, no matter how near to complete discouragement we may come, no matter how we may falter and fall, let us keep on —keep on, struggle though it be. Remember we are blazing the trail. We are pioneer women. We are making an easier road for her who follows.

It is a big and honorable position, this of pioneering. It is ours to-day, here and in the old land, and it is the war which has given us this tremendous opportunity. Who was the

Digitized by Google

first woman to clean the first window in a paid —shall I say in an official capacity? Who wore the first uniform? Who was the first woman to clip the first ticket and pouch the first penny on a motor-bus route?

Who was the first woman to trundle a milk cart? Who was she who conducted the railroad train first, who was the first signalwoman, and what woman dropped the first shell into a shaping machine? Who pulled the first glowing band of copper from a fiery furnace? Who was the first woman to put the first stitch in the first aeroplane wing after the war commenced?

The first to do anything! How difficult it seems on the way to the goal! How terrible appears the anticipation! How wonderful it is to the onlooker! How simple in the accomplishment.

The true pioneer woman must have a deep sympathy. She must have a memory which holds the thought of all difficulties, but a memory which has no bitterness. Her memory must be of overcomings and conquerings. And this for the sake of the woman coming behind.

Digitized by Google

There is no room for impatience, my pioneer friend. Remember those who follow must necessarily be slower than ourselves. If they were not slower they would also have taken the lead. The woman who leads has always the greater cleverness. She has always the greater initiative. Just as the painter who creates a masterpiece from the imaginings of his own brain is greater than he who copies a piece of still life, so is the woman who creates a road for herself greater than she who treads the beaten path.

We must sympathise with our slower sister—come back a few steps even, if we believe that it will hasten her on her way. It is a trialsome, wearisome way to us, but how much more so for her. We have all the mystery of the unknown to unravel. We have the unexpected to meet at every turn. We have the novelty of something fresh round every corner. Be patient if our followers weary somewhat.

And to those who follow, there is no room for discouragement. We can not all be pioneers. There are not enough new ways for all. Blazing the trail is not the prize for every one. But follow the track in the very best way pos-

Digitized by Google

sible; a record can always be beaten. One can always reach the goal faster than the traveller immediately ahead. There are, perhaps, a hundred ways of pioneering.

You women who follow, do not follow blindly. Keep your eyes wide open. Something may have escaped the notice of the pioneer. There may be a shorter cut to the ultimate end of success. There may be a bridge built across a stream where hitherto there have been only stepping-stones—or even where the stream was forded in pioneer times.

No matter whether we follow or whether we go on first, there are opportunities to make things easier for the next one after. Surely, it is a mission in life for us women. Surely, it is a duty from woman to woman that we smooth the path of life for each other. Life is hard at any time. Life, with three-quarters of the world in chaos, is doubly hard—it is four times as hard to women.

Now is the golden opportunity to get rid of all thorns of jealousy; to smooth out wrinkles and push aside stones on the trail of earth's

Digitized by Google

passing. We can all be pioneers in this. There is no trodden way for those who would do good.

If you can not, by some untoward circumstance, become a pioneer of work—a pioneer in a trade, or in a profession—for the love of humanity—for the love of the feminine world, be a pioneer on the road of happiness.

Scatter a blaze of joy along the trail. There is some woman, somewhere, struggling in the dark places. Turn your lantern of kindness, hope and faith upon her path and guide her where the thorns stab less cruelly; lead her where the flints are smoothest.

Dig on—you women who are building foundations. We have a great and glorious aim. Lead on, pioneer women—in this hour of the world's need, we must not—dare not fail.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVIII

ZEPPELIN NIGHTS

WHEN Brother Boche came to town we used him very much as a calendar. As there was a woman in Monaghan who used to calculate from the day "the brown bear came to town." Not to mention old Jimmy McGurk of Aughnagurgan who dated everything from the night of the "big wind."

So, in 1915-16, we dated pretty much in the same way. "The night of the raid when they hit the Strand"—"the night when they neared the Great Eastern Station"—and many a funny circumstance we noted.

Zepps are not all tragedy, all horror, nor yet all fear. Fear is the least part, there is many a good laugh to be got from a Zepp raid. We've had a plenty.

The first night the Zepps came over Bedford Park we had the greatest fun and excitement.

Digitized by Google

We honestly did not realise the danger. We heard the guns round nine o'clock, we did not take much notice because they were faint and distant sounding, but when they grew louder I got that sudden, curious little drop to the heart that an air attack invariably gives me.

"Begorra! they're over us!"

There came a tremendous crash. We rushed up-stairs. It was the only place to go for a decent view. The railway station of Turnham Green District Railway was right back of us. We knew Brother Boche would make for that, there were munition factories at Acton and then the White City had troops billetted in it at that time. All these places were fairly close. In manœuvring over them friend Fritz would be sure to come into good view of our back windows. We tripped each other panting up the stairs. I tried the "return" room first on the second floor with Evie.

"Come on up here!" It was Marion calling. We fairly cantered up the next flight. Evie went ahead to the other rooms on the third floor, but I stopped at the landing window where Maggie already had her body half-way

Digitized by Google

out. It was a little window and swung open inward.

"Come on! come on, quick!—quick!"

Man, the excitement in our voices—the hurry, the tension. What if we should miss them! No thought of fear entered our heads. Curiosity pure and simple was our motive power.

"Here! here! look—you can squeeze out!" Maggie made what room she could for me. I leaned out farther and farther. I balanced on the ledge with one toe keeping me anchored to the stairhead.

"Glory be! Look!" The searchlights were flashing a thousand ways at once. They concentrated on the Hammersmith side. Bang, bang! There came a flash downward—a bomb! Another, another and another. It was great. They tumbled like huge fiery rain drops from what seemed an empty sky.

Boom—boom—boom—flash after flash, a myriad giant crackers burst high among the few woolly clouds lazily crossing the wide dark sea of the night sky.

"Look—look, there it is—there they are—two of them—three of them!"

Digitized by Google

Our voices cracked with excitement.

There sailed gracefully, superbly into sight, the Zepps. Monster implements of sudden death. We forgot that. There was the beauty of them.

Flash—bang! They were dropping more bombs. Swizz—boom! Our guns were after them. We had a glorious view.

"Go on—he's got it—he's got it—he's hit it." Our voices rose to a shriek as one of our gunners made magnificent play.

"No—oh—bother—he's missed it—got it—yes, begum! No; it's gone—what a pity!"

The gigantic silvery oblong rose almost on end, higher and higher. The others disappeared behind clouds of white—it was smoke which they themselves had put out.

"Oh, they're gone!" We were positively and genuinely disappointed. Danger? We hadn't thought of it. We had only one thought, that our guns would "get one." Only to see a Zepp falling—.

"No, no—it's not gone—here it comes! Ah! Ye-oh! Look! Oh, it's coming over us!"

There was a blinding flash, a boom which

Digitized by Google

shook the houses. We involuntarily ducked. The thing came closer—it looked to be straight overhead. There was another flash. Maggie and I made a concerted, unpremeditated, very natural back movement to get in through the window.

We stuck.

There was no going forward—no going back. Boom! Bang! I looked up. The Zepp was overhead. One mighty heave, one mighty rending tug. We were in—we clung to the stair rail and laughed, laughed loud and long. The Zepp sailed swiftly to the northward. The guns died away in the distance. The explosions grew fainter. We had been through our first attack from hustling Heinie.

There was one of us—for purposes of the higher diplomacy I name no names—who thought out a scheme of protection in case of another raid. The other raid came, in the season they come with more than fair regularity. She tried her plan. The idea was to cover the head, flying pieces of bomb or shrapnel would not then do such vital damage. It was a forerunner of a trench helmet, our boys had not yet worn those upturned dishpans of later days.

Digitized by Google

As a matter of fact it was a biscuit (cracker) tin, perforated with holes for ventilation and at the moment of danger put on the head.

She prepared the "armour" and waited for an alarm. She popped on the helmet and promptly became a very literal square-head. It was not comfortable, besides she could not see any of the fun of the air fight. She sought to remove the armourplated head-gear. It stuck—stuck tight. Muffled cries came to us for help. We left our vantage points of sight seeing.

Allons—to the rescue!

The tin hat would not move. We laughed. It tilted to one side and caught. The guns banged and the roar of an aircraft engine filled the air. We tugged and pulled, then sat down and laughed again.

It was hot inside the tin hat. The voice from within became faint and gurgly. Another boom and bang. We were missing all the fireworks. We had another try—"Whiff—bang!" off came the biscuit tin and the exhausted warrior waxed wrath. Our laughter and delay had made her miss the best of the gunners' markmanship. That night they brought down a Zepp in the

Digitized by Google

Thames. It was towed up the river afterward —a wrecked carcase of destruction.

I think Mrs. Garibaldi suffered most from nervous strain. Mrs. G. despite her name was not Italian, and he himself had been dead this many a year. She's had two "chanstses" since anyhow. Allowing a year of mourning widowhood and a "chanst" a year thereafter, it was three years "come June" that "'e 'ad 'ooked it."

Mrs. Garibaldi cleaned offices. She wielded a strong right arm and a voluble tongue. I know every ailment that ever attacked "my Lily." Lily was a pretty fair haired little child. Mrs. Garibaldi lived Westminster direction and Brother Boche loves the environment of old and historic buildings. Mrs. G. dreaded Brother Boche. When the guns sounded she bundled "my Lily" in a blanket, enveloped herself in a shawl, caught up her "joolry" in the one unoccupied hand and hurried to the Tube station. Once there she invariably boarded a train and travelled for safety's sake till the "all clear" was given.

There had been two weeks free of any raids—

Digitized by Google

weather not favorable to the Hun. Disaster had overtaken several Zepps and planes too—but there had been alarms in plenty. Certainly some attempts to reach the city had been made.

Mrs. Garibaldi was talking to me one morning. She was never quite "thro'" when I reached the main offices in the morning.

"I'm just that tired, miss! I'm fair fit to drop. What with raids and a touch of the 'flenza I'm near done. Aye, h'up every night I am—h'up every blessed night—down the Tube—h'up again, night in, night out. Guns goin' and not knowin' what minute you'll be a dead woman. As my late 'usbing 'as said—'Damn them militaries.'"

"Mrs. Garibaldi, why go in the Tube every night? There have only been alarms, no raids for two weeks—there's no need to break your rest."

Mrs. Garibaldi turned away disgustedly. I was assuredly an unsympathetic boor—.

"Well, my Lily loves them rides!" said she, and flounced out of the swing doors with a flourish of her O'Cedar mop.

"Them rides—" Sure enough raid trips were

Digitized by Google

free; at least friend Fritz was missing his goal of frightfulness in one small child's heart.

It was in Empire House, too, that I had the window blind bother. Only our big Lecture Hall was used at night and only those windows had to be darkened. As the length of one side was practically all glass, conforming to darkening rules was no joke.

On one certain back window a blind was an impossibility. The window faced a corner wall fashioned of white tiles; the faintest light reflected on the wall and that again to the street. A straight and subtle guide-post for Heinie soaring heavenward.

"The copper," otherwise "shiney-bloke" according to Mrs. Garibaldi, officially the police constable of the beat, came to me twice. He was very decent. There was a fifty-pound (two hundred and fifty dollars) fine attached to a non-compliance with the act. Ours was not non-compliance, but sheer inability to get blinds to darken the wretched thing.

It was George Furr, our office boy, who originated the successful idea.

"Get some blue, miss, like mother uses in the

Digitized by Google

wash and mix a paste with whitening (calcimine) and paint the window."

"Good idea, George—get it."

George fetched in the appliances. He seemed positively eager, but George though fifteen, over school age and a meticulous clerk, was very much of a boy after all. The blue pudding was in nature of a mud pie.

We mixed it, and with much labor and a large paint brush applied it to the glass. It served the required purpose. That same evening, September 13th, 1915, a tremendous air raid came over the central London districts. Every window in Empire House was broken with the exception of the one plastered with blue.

I wrote the news to Jack Vowel. He replied that a bunch of the boys were coming over to get "blued," and so become bombproof. The breaking of these windows seemed somewhat unusual to me anyhow. They were not smashed as one would expect, but—being long French windows reaching from ceiling to the verandah levels, they were split in long thin sections, absolutely straight, of about half an inch in width. The windows were somewhat of a joke—we

Digitized by Google

could not get new ones in for some weeks, and the reason? Well, glass such as the plate used was made in Austria! We were at war with that country.

If unexpectedly overtaken by a hostile air raid, and if no shelter is available, lie down flat on the road. That is official. There is much less liability of being hit when lying than there is when standing—also if you see a shell coming, go towards it! It is safer always presupposing that you will remember the rules and regulations when under fire!

I never lay down myself, having a healthy regard for my clothes and a sporting sense of taking a chance on being hit, but I saw a policeman do it. He was a "dug-out" on point duty. A "dug-out" in Army, Navy or Constabulary is he who has honorably done his years of duty and returned, only in the stress of to-day to be called once more to active service.

My dug-out friend had gained a little, even a generous little, embonpoint during retirement. He directed traffic with magisterial solemnity; his white gloved hands rose and fell with authority.

Digitized by Google

It was a May day and had rained. The street, not yet cleaned since the shower, was a mixture of oil and dust and water. An aeroplane buzzed overhead, another and yet another.

"A raid!" shouted some one. Every one craned upward to see what could be seen. All except one. Friend Robert represented the Law, the Law was "Lor" to him. "If no shelter within immediate reach, lie down." He lay down.

Then some one, well informed, shouted that they were our own planes. They circled out of sight. We set about our business and Robert rose up. We roared. Nice clean face, well muddied gloves that had once been white, a "corporation" dappled with oil and dust and water. It was the Law. Robert resumed the direction of traffic with the profoundness of a criminal judge.

What to do in the way of rescuing valuables in case of a raid was a point. The house might be hit and yet there might be a chance of escape. The house might be set on fire by an incendiary bomb. There were a half dozen things could happen and still the inhabitants be saved. What of our money, our jewelry, our papers?

Digitized by Google

We packed them—packed them securely in a dressing-case or small bag, and left them within arm's reach of the bedside. It was a good plan, but I often wonder if the house had been hit, would we have remembered the valuables.

Raid dressing was another problem. Sights of unbelievable comicality greeted us many an evening when we went outside to watch the gun flashes. There were an old couple who lived not far from us. I saw them on the street one night on my way home. The gun display was magnificent. There was no danger as the affair was at the other side of the city. Old father B. had apparently rushed from bed in somewhat of a panic. He was arrayed in a nightshirt, a tasseled nightcap and round his ample shoulders a toga-like flapping garment, which resolved itself into the red parlor table cover, as a searchlight sent the avenue into sudden brilliance. Ma B. had secured a starched lace curtain. It draped her attenuated form and trailed on the garden path from which vantage point she scanned the horizon.

But apart from the ridiculous, stores actually

Digitized by Google

advertised "Zeppelin robes, Aeroplane Caps" and so forth. Very dainty and fascinating, but not much protection withal on a wet night, with bombs falling alternately with rain drops.

"Go down to the cellar," said Chrissie Bell to me the morning after a bad raid. "Did I go down to the cellar? No—I'd rather face a dozen Zeppelins than one black beetle and our cellar's full of them."

Voilà! the logic of the feminine Britisher!

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIX

SOME OF THE BOYS

THE first letter to come in response to an *Express* advertisement was from a soldier called Peat. He gets a chapter to himself. He rose in importance as time went on.*

The second letter was from Sam J. Peters. As Mrs. Malaprop might say, this was very "coincident." The advertisement was for Peter —the first letter from Peat, and the second letter from Peters.

Sam J. was an Englishman, although he had made his home in Canada and had enlisted in the First C. E. F. He was badly smashed up in the second Ypres scrap, but nothing to his condition after Loos—I think it was.

He was in the American Hospital at Plymouth, and later graduated to a Convalescent Home. To my astonishment one day he walked

*See page 236.

Digitized by Google

into the Efficiency Offices at Empire House. He was in hospital blues and leaned heavily on a stick. His wound was in his leg.

Peters thought he had known Peter, and I took him home in a taxi—he could not have negotiated a train or bus—to see if he could identify a photograph. He did the moment he saw the group of soldiers, but told us Peter had looked much stouter when he had seen him. That was reasonable enough as many of the boys put on flesh when in the trenches. Sam J. recollected that he had lost his own company, the Second, but had found them again. He told us a bunch of the Tenth were in the trench. He was wounded while crawling back, and among those who helped drag him in was Peter. The boys had called him Pete, and more, it seemed he had shared his emergency ration and his cigarettes with Peters—Sam J. and others.

Sam J. disappeared from our ken for quite a time. Then he turned up unexpectedly on another day. He had been to France, got wounded a second time and then was convalescing at the Camp at Orpington. It was a bad smash, this second one, coupled with rheumatism it made

Digitized by Google

him a sad case, yet he expected to go to the front yet again. As a civilian Peters was an electrical engineer, but like many others he had given his business up to take part in this scrap of scraps.

Lance-Corporal Carey wrote, too, in answer to the *Express* advertisement. He was in a southern hospital, but went later to his home town in the north of England. He apparently knew Peter well. His letter was short, concise, soldier-like—"Pete Watson went out on the night of April twenty-second and never came back."

An epitaph perhaps.

Armourer Sergeant Billings was Peter's immediate senior. Like Peter he knew all sides of army life, for he had been in the Regulars, a captain in the Dorsets, I believe, and had gone to Canada to hunt fortune and adventure just as had Peter when he left the service as a lieutenant in the Suffolks.

Stanley Billings got his Canadian adventures by playing the rôle of a trapper. For weeks and months and even years at a time he roamed the wilds setting his traps on his regular beat which

Digitized by Google

he had marked as his own, then visiting the caches every now and then. Tall, with fair good looks, he was the type one could easily imagine wrapped in a mackinaw and warm fur cap with ear flaps down, gliding with snowshoes strapped to mocassined feet over the vast, cold wildernesses of the far Northwest, content to be companionless, yet loving company when nature palled.

Billings spent a Sunday with us in July. We had several letters from him, but his address was mislaid and since leaving the old country we have lost all trace. I am sorry. It was he who told of the Boche treachery toward the Tenth. Some of the enemy had secured British uniforms, they dressed in them—kept at a safe distance from the soldiers, but yelled in perfect English—"Come on, the Tenth—come on!" The boys answered the call which apparently came from an officer of their own, went forward only to reach a trench carefully mined and timed to explode the moment they got to it. And yet people preach that there be not bitter feeling held toward the German.

The last to write was our now very good

Digitized by Google

friend George A. Vowel. Corporal Vowel is known among his comrades as "Black Jack." He is a native American, from Texas, was holding down a homestead at Hanna, Alberta, when war broke out and he there and then enlisted with the famous Tenth.

Jack was a machine gunner and distinguished himself early in 1917 when he held back, manning his gun single-handed, an attack of a German company. For this Jack was awarded the Military Medal. He is the only soldier I know who has been in the scrap since August of 1914 and who has not been wounded, although he has been in every fight with the Tenth and later with the Thirteenth Battalion. But he has been in hospital twice—once with mumps and once with measles.

It was Jack who in one of his letters, spoke of a reunion which was held by all who remained of the original Tenth. This was in April of '16. There were then thirty-two of the men alive in France. To-day, if there are three others besides Jack, I am surprised.

Jack came to see us on his leave of 1915. It was in November and he and young Art Chis-

Digitized by Google

Black Jack

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

holm did London during their eight days from the front. The men of the British Army get these eight days once a year, if they are lucky—and those who live in Ireland or Scotland are allowed extra traveling time.

Young Chis was twenty and already had spent two birthdays in the trenches. He was an ingenuous lad, and came from Vancouver. Originally he had fought with the Seventh and later was transferred in a draft.

We hope and pray that Black Jack will have the honor and glory of being one of the originals to march triumphantly through Berlin. We hope and pray that it will not be long before we can welcome him home to the country of his birth. There is a something which we who have been in the fight for long must bear—just an added little cross. We must see new troops gain the summit of victory—we must see new troops in the high lights of triumph—now when the enemy is weaker, when the Allies are stronger—we shall see men who did not go early march in the glory of success through the home streets—and we shall remember our own lost boys. Our boys who went out when the weight

Digitized by Google

was all against us—our boys who stood in water and mud and blood for weeks on end because there were no others to relieve them—our boys who died—who passed on long since. Only the glory of memory is theirs—I would plead with you of the Allies, new and old—do not forget them. It was they who saved you. The boys to-day, no less brave, yet are but *completing* a victory already begun.

Jack Vowel's letters are in themselves an epitome of the war. He has a power of description, a sense of contrast and a sense of humor, rarely combined. For such as he—and for the brave boys who are going daily now, there is not much that we can do—a prayer, a thought, a cherry note, a small something to show that they are not forgotten—that we are grateful.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XX

SILHOUETTES OF WAR

IT was London on an April day of 1916—wonderful, soul-stirring old St. Paul's seemed to raise its stately dome with yet greater grace, more distinction, a something of pride when the nation wept for the passing, sang praise for the heroism and prayed for the restful eternity of the boys who had given their lives for others—a service in memory of Canadians fallen at Ypres a year agone.

The day was muggily warm. There was a steady, drizzling down-pour of fine rain; gloom and murk of weather seemed the only stage setting to a pageant of sorrow.

The crowds gathered early, sombre crowds; people whose faces carried the mark of sacrifice. We pushed our way among the throng. We had set the nave itself as our objective.

The crowd seethed on the steps of the cathedral. Suddenly there was a movement, a mur-

Digitized by Google

mur, no more, it announced the coming of some one of importance—"Kitchener" half a dozen voices exclaimed. The tall, military figure passed silently with bowed head up the wide stone steps. Only once more did I see him before his tragic drowning, and that on the steps of the War Office with General Joffre.

Another murmur, longer, more intense. It swelled, died, then swelled again, yet never to a cheer. "How sad they look!"

It was their Majesties, the Queen in black, the King with the mourning band of crêpe around his khaki uniformed arm. They passed with lowered heads into the cool shadow of St. Paul's.

There came the rustling as of autumn leaves as the congregation seated itself, then rose again as the organ pealed out till the Funeral March of Chopin echoed lingeringly upward to the dome. The clergy entered and the service began.

A service of memory this for the fallen sons of Canada, the gallant daughter of a mighty mother. Canada who has given of the richness of her wealth in coin and men. Canada, who

Digitized by Google

like India, Australia, South Africa and the dependencies, had gained a record unparalleled for superbness of sacrifice.

A prayer mounted heavenward, then boys' voices like the voices from an angel chorus, rose and swelled. The Archbishop in tones clear, yet faltering at times, spoke words of courage, words of hope, words of cheer. A sob gathered in volume, then hushed its sound. To the right a King was weeping, a King mourning the men whose loyalty to the Empire had meant death. A King wept—a King who is a man as they, loved by all, sacrificing, giving.

The clergyman's voice came louder, firmer—it was the end of his address:

"On Fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead."

There was silence. A woman moaned softly. Then slowly, magnificently, there rose to Heaven peal on peal, the call of "The Last Post." A hundred silver trumpets spoke, and the golden

Digitized by Google

dome of St. Paul's echoed and re-echoed till hearts lifted, till eyes brightened, till souls sang in the joyousness of the new life triumphant—the mighty epitaph of heroes passing upward.

Our boys were not dead—our boys were but lent to God.

* * * *

London again, the Strand now and noon of any day. Typists, clerks, business people of both sexes, of all trades are hurrying through the luncheon hour. Lyons', the A. B. C., the Corner House, all are crowded—sometimes I am homesick for the sights and sounds of the Strand at noon.

There is a stir of traffic in the station yard of Charing Cross, that golden gateway to the Continent. That dull, tarnished, awful entrance to the home of death—the Western Front. That wonderful, soul inspiring, panic strewn exit to Blighty, to hospital, to life!

The policeman stops all passage way to vehicles or foot travellers. A crowd, as all London crowds, springs from nowhere. A cosmopolitan crowd this—a Belgian refugee, a Hindoo in a white turban, an Effendi in the green tur-

Digitized by Google

ban of the faithful. A city man "over-age" in broadcloth and silk topper; a tattered newsboy, a gutter merchant dancing up and down a weird, furry animal. Just across an Italian officer, a sailor by the railings, a Japanese he; a Serbian soldier, an Italian, a French *poilu*. A hundred of others. Black garbed women in silks, and flower sellers, right in the front row there. See them? Big white aprons, black straw sailor hats. But see the foremost one—on her head a man's checked tweed cap—"'Twas his before he 'listed. He's a sergeant now. He's got the D. C. M. Look! I got a letter from the Colonel."

She dives into her gown for a much worn letter. I have read it twice before, but the news is never stale. Mrs. Anderson knows my men were there, and she knows I understand. She understands too. She is one of the great British sisterhood.

But hush! I strain on tiptoe—dead silence. An ambulance goes by, on it an orderly sits with uplifted hand, a nurse inside. No noise. The cases are too serious for a sounded welcome. Some one sobs—some one whose boy did not

Digitized by Google

even get the chance of being wounded. Poor lads!

A sudden murmur. Two officers with cushy head wounds. Give them a cheer, folks. Women, do I see you turning away at sight of a blood-stained bandage? It's war time. You've seen worse. Throw them a flower.

There is a wild whirl of crimson roses, a shower of pink carnations. A big car passes. Weary Tommies lie back too spent to smile, but wait a moment. A splash of blue and a heap of forget-me-nots land on the rug which covers the boys' knees. One leans forward. What is that expression on his face? Pain, surprise, wonderment? That curious, deep, questioning look of all wounded soldiers, that look all have in their eyes, be they black or grey or blue or brown. "Why has this been done to me? What in life, in death, in heaven, in hell, have I looked upon in yonder blood-steeped land?"

And so they pass. Huge motors full, motors lined with white linen, and softened with down cushions; motors driven by liveried men with white hair, motors with coronets on the door

Digitized by Google

panels, motors with brown-faced women at the wheel.

And these men? Returning soldiers—all wounded, all sick and weary and war sodden. Some have come to stay, disabled for all time. Others bide but a time and then go back.

Have they any claim on us? Have they any claim of heart, of soul, of prayer?

* * * * * * *

It was 8:45 of a winter morning, and the coach of the city bound District Railway train was crowded to capacity. A score of people got out at Sloane Square. They were regular commuters. That cleared the gangway of strap-hangers and the girl sitting nearest the door had an uninterrupted view of the passengers.

A sailor sat opposite to her. He had his worldly possessions in his regulation white spotted kerchief. Oblivious to every one, he read avidly from across the aisle the news in the offside of the girl's newspaper. She folded it up. People were more interesting than news. Besides the boy looked lonely.

"Going back?"

Digitized by Google

The sailor smiled: "Yes."

"Well, won't you take a paper to read on the train?"

The boy shyly put out his hand to receive the sheet, then smiled again, a softly pathetic lighting of a face where loneliness had rested supreme in the expression.

Some one cared.

A general sat beside the girl. She could see the glint of the crossed swords of his shoulder badge, and the gleam from the oak leaves which rimmed the peak of his service cap. He sighed once or twice, and scanned for a third time the casualty list of the day before.

In the farther corner a family group occupied four seats. There was grandmother, there was unmarried auntie, there was mother and clinging to her hand a five-year-old boy. There was father, in one arm he held tight clasped a baby girl, with his free hand he steadied a rifle and bayonet which rested against the seat. The tiny hands of the baby explored his rugged, bronzed, hard-bitten face. His kit-bag lay, a heavy heap, at his feet. Strapped to his knap-

Digitized by Google

sack was a cardboard box which oozed some sweetness—home-made goodies.

There was a tragic gaiety over the party. The mother furtively wiped eyes whose lids already reddened. The grandmother sighed audibly, stifled it to laugh at some sally of the aunt. The man responded with a touch of dull joviality.

"We're there!" It was the grandmother who commenced to gather parcels, but it was a mistake. We were only at St. James. The girl knew for where they were bound. It was all too obvious. Victoria—the tragic 9:15—the train which carried short leave men back to France, back to the front, back to the hell of German make.

"Victoria!" The girl conductor called the name cheerily. Cheer was the great antidote, a smile the only drug to still the achings of thousands of hearts.

The father stumbled to his feet, he caught up his rifle and kit-bag; the mother held out her arms to the child, but the little one clung the closer. There was a jam at the door. The soldier caught sight of the general, stammered,

Digitized by Google

stepped backward. It was impossible for him to salute.

"After you—" it was the officer who spoke. He poked a tentative finger at the baby girl who paid no heed: "Da-da—Da-da!"

The party moved along the platform, through the subway, up the stone stairway into the main depot of Victoria.

There was a seething mass of figures, and the girl lost sight of the party as they were swallowed in a struggle to reach number five platform. A train stood with engine panting. Already heads and bodies leaned half-way out from the windows. Already hand-wavings and final shouts of farewell carried to the barrier where friends stood—all women these friends.

As the station clock clicked the quarter hour, the girl caught sight of the party again. The women were waving handkerchiefs wildly, their eyes streaming with tears, the tiny baby yelled piteously "Dad-da-da!" The mother clasped her convulsively without words. The grandmother spoke.

"Da-da has gone in the big puff-puff!" The old woman was brave, she lead the little boy by

Digitized by Google

the hand—his father, her last son, following where three had gone before.

"When'll Daddy come back, gran'ma?"

But there was no answer. The 9:15 train carried out a load of throbbing, pulsing, vital humanity—how many would come back?

In God's mercy the answer lay hid.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXI

THE SECOND LINE OF DEFENCE

I

WOMEN! Yes, women are in our second line, have *been* our second line of defence since 1915.

The Germans have pushed women and children before them when fighting in the early days of the war, knowing full well that our boys of Britain and France could not fire at such a target, and so the Hun advanced behind this dastardly fashioned cover. The German in later battles has chained women to his machine guns and forced them to fire.

Thank God, our troops though going through the horrors of hell do not become devils—they remain men.

Our second line of defence is composed of women too, but our second line is in the shipyards, the munition factories, the cloth mills,

Digitized by Google

the aerodromes. It is in the every-day occupations of street-car driving, of clerking, of truck driving, of railroad work, of freight yards and coal yards, of gardening, of farming, of road repairing. There is the every-day matter of plumbing, of carpentry and of electrical work. Women are doing any and all of these things.

In the old country British women have made good. They have succeeded where it was supposed that they would never enter. In the old country the necessity, not for conscription but for organised woman labor has been recognised. If I had power to-day in the United States, I would establish huge training centres in every branch of industrial work for the women who may eventually have to do men's work. There may never be the same degree of need as in France and Britain, but there may. We did not expect nor anticipate so universal a demand upon us. It came and we were not entirely ready. We had to make an effort amounting to the superhuman.

Women were dumped into men's work, when the demand came, without previous experience, without mental or physical preparation. Em-

Digitized by Google

ployers had the attitude of "we must use them, but we know they are no good."

Think of it—women starting on men's work absolutely ignorant of tools or machinery, not even able to handle implements of this trade or that except in most amateur fashion. Woman expected to turn out the same quantity and quality of work as previously done by a man with years of experience, twice her strength and possibly a long boy apprenticeship.

Woman struggled, battled and fought. "No good," said the employer, who refused to think or to reason. "I can't have women fooling round here, wasting time, wasting money and wasting material."

"You're not giving us a fair chance," the woman's answer came fast enough. "Are we to know by instinct how to run machinery, how to turn lathes and guide motor saws? Are we to step from a baking board to a machine bench and bring the same calloused hands to endure rough work as the men before us? Are we to leave the washtub, the typewriter, the sewing machine and handle a plumber's tools with an

Digitized by Google

inborn aptitude? Are we to throw down the embroidery frame and pick up the handles of a plow?"

Woman failed in many of her enterprises at the start. She had the wrong idea, which is the idea of all women, of work. She cheerfully went out to an eight, nine, ten or twelve-hour day of men's labor; with a little less cheer she returned to a lonely home and a meal prepared by herself. Hot, tired, aching, her heart lonely for the man who was fighting for her, she sat down to her solitary meal, too wearied to eat. She with no cheer left, set about fixing her household. Possibly marketing had to be done—a hard, worrisome marketing, where supplies are limited and prices high.

It would not do. Too much has always been expected of women. We are so versatile, we are so eager and willing when the call has come, that we attempt too much, we attempt more than our bodies can endure, though our spirits are willing.

No man, no ordinary man, ever did a hard day's work outside and then returned home to

Digitized by Google

clean a house, cook meals and mend clothes. No sir—not he. One man—one job. One woman—a dozen jobs.

Nor did man ever do all this on "women's wages"—why the distinction? We do double the work, need twice the energy and get nearly half as little to provide that energy.

I am no ranter for a vote, for suffrage, for "rights," and so forth, but I am an advocate of fair play and at least a common-sense outlook on our situation.

The employer began to see reason, albeit it was his own idea of reason. The average employer, not yet attuned to the "hurt" of war giving, saw a way to increased output and increased profit. He would partly train these women. He would trust to their extra trait of conscientiousness, to their eagerness to help, to their loyalty to the soldiers—a loyalty which as I write has held woman to the lathe while so-called men strike—oh! the pitiful cowardice of it! What if soldiers struck?

The employer trusted woman's valorous heart, beating high in the cause of right; he trusted in woman's instinctive guardianship of

Digitized by Google

her offspring—she would endure all that her children might be safe. It was for that that we women fought, safe in more ways than from the barbarous hands of an infamous enemy though that were danger menacing enough in all surety.

He would employ them on men's work and he would pay "woman's wages." Again, where does the distinction come in? Rather should our pay be higher by reason of the extra effort we infuse into all our work. There are a dozen things we must have, things vital to our comfort which man can do without. Appeal after appeal goes forth for women to save—save on women's wages? Let some man try to do it.

No; women's wages did not meet the case, nor yet partial training. Equal pay—equal work. There was the new slogan of women. Equal work as far as physical strength and endurance can carry it—it has carried British women pretty far—it has carried them to the firing line, it has carried French women there, Italian women, and no doubt can be but that American women will go as far.

Digitized by Google

We got our training. We got our pay. We were giving our work, of the best—equal work.

It was a Frenchwoman, noble, vital, strong in her cause, who scored the winning trick.

Not men's pay for women's work, did she cry, no; on the posters with which she sprinkled Paris there read "Equal pay for equal work—*for men's sake!*" That did the trick—that "worked the oracle."

Trades unions which had whined to a government of men's representatives, hugging their little, measly scrap of paper—"women only to be employed for the duration of the war"—Afraid of us? Good. Then equal pay to recompense men's work done by women for men's sake. We were not afraid of them.

There was no employer on earth so altruistic, when the war should be over and he had a well trained, experienced corps of women workers, as to disband those for men who probably would work more slowly, and yet at wages half as high again.

Men are quite human after all. I repeat we got our training, we got our pay. We are giving of our work—the best—equal work for

Digitized by Google

men's sake. Incidentally it is to our own benefit, but of greater moment yet to our country and her cause.

Take the large railway companies of England. Go visit their freight yards. Watch the dozens of young women handling goods with the ease of old timers. No apparent effort, no straining, no panting, no twisted backs nor wrenched muscles, except through personal carelessness or sheer accident.

The secret? Go a step farther and back of the main freight yard you find another. Not a whit tidier, not a whit less crowded with goods. A few men standing about, a dozen girls in uniform handling heavy boxes, another dozen studying bills of lading, seeking into the mysteries of f. o. b. and c. o. d.

"Not that way, missie—handle your crowbar—so! See? That eases the strain and heaves the box. Try again!" An instructor, too old for service and in a "starred" trade, teaches patiently, carefully his eager pupils.

This is the freight yard school. Here the girls learn "how" before being drafted to the yards to "do."

Digitized by Google

There were the public vehicle companies. The general motor omnibus people trained and tutored their women employees. They sent them out on experimental bus trips until gasoline became too scarce for anything but the strictest need. They showed the girl how to take fares, how to clip tickets, how to help awkward passengers on and off, what to do in case of accident and so forth. Of the girl conductors not one has been known to fail in facing an emergency, nor are emergencies infrequent on the war congested traffic streets of London.

The majority of the bus women were chosen from among the widows, wives or sisters of previous men employees. They, as did the women in nearly all other branches of labor where it was asked, promised that the moment a man was discharged disabled from the army yet sufficiently fit to resume his former occupation, they would give up their job. We women are no deliberate blacklegs. Already many such second transfers are made—the women, fit and experienced, are passing on to some work harder still, something too severe for a disabled man to do.

Digitized by Google

These women conductors had all the wit and repartee of their predecessors; yet their manner was courteous in the extreme, their care of a wounded man who boarded their bus more tender, more sympathetic than the care of the most highly qualified nurse.

I remember being on a crowded bus one day when close by the upper window there was a very, not to say an extremely stout woman. She wanted to get out at one of the stops. Her passage down the bus was slow. The conductress became impatient. She looked the stout party up and down—"Going to walk out, mother, or shall I tip the bus?"

It was another bus woman who taught manners to a hyphenated Britisher. The semi-Hun was the only man in a bus crowded with women, no seat was vacant. At Wellington Street, some more passengers boarded the vehicle, among them an Australian soldier in his hospital blues, and leaning on crutches, his left leg missing. The pre-war custom was for men in a crowded vehicle to offer seats to women. Today the situation is somewhat reversed. Women offer seats to wounded men.

Digitized by Google

The Australian hopped carefully through the door. He stood. For a moment no one offered him a seat. There was the civilian man near him, but he did not move. Then several of us got up to make a place for the boy, but the girl conductor was wide awake. She had no room for slackers. The obvious Hun, naturalised though he must have been, sat on stolidly looking out the window.

"Don't move, ladies," said she, "this is my job." Whereupon she approached the semi-Hun, tapped him on the shoulder, clasped the cord of the signal bell with the other hand. "This is your getting off place," said she.

"It's not—I've paid my money for a seat—I sit."

"Here's your money!" The girl dived into her coat pocket, produced her personal purse, handed him two pennies and jerked the signal cord.

The man got off. The wounded Australian sat down and we women smiled our satisfaction. So do we demand courtesy and care for the men who have offered their all for our sakes.

Brave little bus women in your blue uni-

Digitized by Google

forms, your white pipings, your wide brimmed felt hat with its leather strap hugging your rounded chin. It was you, I think, who awakened a greater chivalry in the hearts of British men. It was for your sake that seats were fastened to the bus stairs, so that you might rest in snatched moments during your hard eight hours; it was the sight of your trim little figure climbing and re-climbing those tiresome steps to collect fares which suggested to the minds of most civilian men and all soldiers and sailors, to hand their pennies over before they mounted up and so save you an added journey. It was you, tiny brown mite of a girl, who enacted Eve and the apple to the driver's Adam. Outside the "Angel" at Islington it was. I had business at the Agricultural Hall. We stopped some minutes at the corner and I noticed myself the fine display of rosy cheeked apples on a coster's barrow. You, it was—coy young worker—who swung down, purchased two of the brilliant fruit, handed one to your driver, and bit into the other with white, even teeth, then smiled alluringly and changed your apple for his! As chance would have it, your bus took

Digitized by Google

me back in a few hours' time, chance again put a coster's barrow outside the "Angel"—roses, deep red, shell pink, creamy yellow—it was not chance that made your driver climb down—I saw his War Service Badge as he limped by, a hero of Mons—purchase a brilliant rose and hand it to you, blushing no less brilliantly.

A humble romance in the heat and murk of war, but still romance.

The filling of positions by women where men only had worked formerly was so gradual, yet so persistent that we scarcely noticed the difference. The smooth routine of affairs prevailed with truly very little interruption. Only to those who had been away a month or two were the changes noticeable.

"What!" exclaimed an army officer as he sought his exclusive club in Piccadilly after six months in France—"What! women in these sacred rooms!"

Sure enough there were women waitresses, women valets, girl bell-hops, where women had never been permitted before.

I laughed the first time I ever saw women window cleaners, and I laughed at my first rail-

Digitized by Google

way porter, not because they were clumsy or awkward, no, far from it. The window cleaners worked in pairs—a smart uniform theirs, a Georgian coat and breeches, high boots, peaked cap all in shaded dusty blue—blue bucket, blue ladder and possibly blue cloths. They swung along the Strand with easy grace, carrying nothing! Following behind, came a sailor, in his hands the light, long ladder; following him, a soldier (Anzac), in his hands the bucket, following him, yet another soldier (Canadian) with the sponge balanced on two fingers.

More romance—assuredly more romance.

It was at Waterloo I saw the porter. I had gone to meet Rob Henderson coming on leave, a deputy for his sister. I saw him first. He struggled manfully with kit-bag, knapsack and half a dozen packages of obvious souvenirs. Coming tripping lightly beside him was the railway porter—over her arm his overcoat!

"I felt a bit shy at first," a porter told me, "but I soon got over it—I can take a tip now as casually as any man!"

There are aspects of man's work which are simple in the extreme.

Digitized by Google

The newspapers noticed the first woman employed in a railway signal box, they remarked on the first railway train conductor, but I never saw mention made of the first girl who drove the first horse carriages of town salesmen from store to store and who helped drag in the boxes of samples; I saw no mention of the girls who guided restaurant supply trucks, who lifted and hauled trays of bread and meats and pies to chain cafés, of elevator girls who ran the huge subway lifts, who drove delivery vans and a thousand other occupations one forgets men ever did.

Shades of suffragettes—how we who worked had resented the huge, glaring notice on the Royal Exchange, "No women admitted." How we triumphed when the clerical staff perforce became all girls and the sign still remained up. There were women bankers, women in insurance offices, women dispensers, women in the coal yards, women who delivered the milk and women who delivered the bread. There was no occupation could daunt us, our only thought to carry on.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXII

THE SECOND LINE OF DEFENCE

II

TO BE a munitioneer was the acme of all hopes among women who wanted to be "in" the war.

Of the five million odd women who are working for Britain in these days, there are one million three hundred and two thousand in government employ; of these seven hundred thousand when the last numbers were taken in 1917, were in munition plants including shipyards, but not including one thousand, four hundred and fifty trained mechanics in the Royal Flying Corps, nor women employed as veterinaries and attendants at the horse hospitals, nor the women in the Tommywaacs and Wrens (Women's Auxiliary Army Corps and Women's Royal Naval Service). The majority of these women had not worked at outside work before. The flag

Digitized by Google

had made a mighty appeal; the women made a mighty response.

The government of Great Britain besides its ninety National Arsenals has had to handle five thousand and forty-six controlled factories. It has had to find shifts of workers for day and night—three shifts in the twenty-four. It has had to rearrange much for the altered personnel of the staffs. It has had to see that skilled workers are evenly distributed. It has had to solve the housing problem, and to provide for the welfare of the workers, to look after their health and their recreations.

At first there was naturally an outcry when women determined to enter munition work en masse. It was not women's natural work. Well, man will hardly contend that killing other men is his natural work. Yet, it is being done.

Munition work was too heavy for women—that may be, yet no one ever argued that rising at six in the morning to wash the clothes of a family, to wring them, blue them, starch them, mangle them, iron them, mend them, in between while clean house, prepare meals and see to the children—incidentally bear the children—no

Digitized by Google

one ever said that was too hard work for a woman, and still it has been done, is being done —I suppose, unfortunately, must continue to be done by women. Why, take the ironing alone, a lady in Akron, Ohio, has told me that for a certain purpose, tests were made—in ironing an ordinary wash, a woman in handling her usual sized irons lifted one ton during the process. Not all at once, no, but neither in the processes of munition work does she lift a ton all at once.

Spring of 1915 saw women going more quickly each week into work that we had never thought to do. The summer of 1915 saw munition plants springing into existence where green fields had lain fallow and sportive rabbits were the only living thing. At Gretna Green in Scotland, a factory nine miles long with a working staff of twenty-eight thousand appeared as though by the wave of a magician's wand, and the majority of the workers there were women.

Close by London, a town—brick villas, electric light, hot and cold water system, bus and street-car transport, amusement centres—sufficient for the housing of two thousand souls, was complete in the space of a couple of months.

Digitized by Google

These are only incidents of the immensity of Britain's task. We had to provide shells, and after all they are only a small part of munition work, shells for ourselves on the Western Front, shells for our Allies, shells for Salonika, for Egypt, for Mesopotamia, for South Africa, for West Africa, for East Africa, for the Cameroons, for possible incursions into India, for home defence. Small wonder there was no time in which to deny lies spread in neutral countries about us, lies still used by the pro-German and the anti-English in Canada and in the States, lies which made the hardships of war all the harder to bear.

Women, except in a few cases, have not taken on the more highly skilled jobs. It could not be expected, but in a vast number of things women have excelled men at their own game. This was willingly acknowledged by foremen in especial regard to work on delicate apparatus. Women had the advantage of supple fingers, a delicate and sensitive touch and smaller hands. In many cases the smallness of their hands and feet was a disadvantage, a disadvantage which has now been overcome by the introduction of

Digitized by Google

LOUISE B. PEAT

Her sister-in-law. Nurse in Mesopotamia

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

women-size tools. A smaller lathe, a treadle with foot-piece shaped to a woman's foot, a shovel sufficiently light for her to handle. A dozen readjustments such as these are revolutionising the industrial world—and for good.

The woman worker is not hidebound by the conventions of labor. She is willing to learn, but she brings a fresh view-point and her very lack of knowledge gives her a firmer grasp of the essential needs. She sees a job from a different angle. I was connected with one large controlled factory in England. Here girls were literally drafted in by the thousand. They were shown their work and a stimulus given to the learning by an offer of prizes to those who could make adaptable suggestions for increasing the output. In the manufacture of a certain part of the article turned out, it was passed along revolving drums. The articles were placed eighteen inches apart, the drum moved, and while the eighteen inches of empty space went by the worker stood idle with folded arms. A girl of eighteen was put on to this work. Mr. Casson, in charge of the readjustment, had fired her enthusiasm for work by his talks. She determined

Digitized by Google

to study her job and earn one of the prizes. She queried the foreman, the assistant efficiency person, the manager, the proprietor himself as to the reason for the empty eighteen inches on her drum. No one knew. It had always been so and presumably was all right. The girl filed her suggestion form—"Reduce the 18" by 16"—leave two inches between each article—reduce time waste and increase output." She won first prize. It was in the very early days of woman's wholesale advent into war work; possibly there was a trifle of jealousy afoot, but the manager effectively took the glow from the rosy pleasure of her triumph by his speech on presenting the prize.

"I thought," said he, "there were some things not necessary to the winning of this war—now I find that all things are necessary—even a woman's curiosity."

Those days are gone. It is only the small minded, narrow-spirited man who is afraid of the woman worker. In many cases we do much better work than men, in many cases when on piece work we turn out much more. Only last spring the manager of the Carborundum Com-

Digitized by Google

pany at Niagara Falls told me that he had found girls better in every way.

We take no undue credit for this. We have a reason. We are working now with a greater inspiration than ever man had in the days gone by. We are not working for our employer, our pay envelope nor for ourselves. We are not working at all. We are fighting. We are the second line of defence. We are fighting with all the courageous, ferocious spirit of a tigress defending her young. Each woman is fighting for some man, as is each man fighting for some woman. Walk through any factory, watch a woman at lightning speed filling shells—ramming the awful "dressing" home—watch her unnoticed, mark her grim set lips, note the steeliness of her eyes, and listen to the muttered words—"That—for the man who got my Bill."

There you are. There's a reason for our greater skill, greater considering our experience; there's a reason for our larger output, our quicker work, our concentration, our never-failing will to endure.

Walk round any factory and through any shipyard—see the women hammering, rivetting,

Digitized by Google

caulking, watch them pouring out leaden missiles, pulling bands of copper white hot from glowing furnaces, watch them drilling shell bodies for eighteen pounders, watch them tapping copper bands and rivets in the plugs of high explosives. Go, if you have courage, to the danger zones, peep into the cubicles of twisted rope where one woman, masked, goggled, overalled, gloved, works silently, grimly alone—alone, so that if her materials explode one woman, one only, is blown to pieces, not fifty or one hundred.

Walk down the aisle of a powder factory, hidden deep as it may be in a sheltered cup of the Surrey Downs, friend Boche will seek it out—hear bomb explosions to right and left as the Hun circles round in his aircraft. Watch the women workers line up in their air formations, watch them march out, calm, cool, collected, but all the time unwilling, to enforce safety. Watch the corps of women "firemen" stand to the ready with hose outrun, and watermains unlocked.

There is a reason, an inspiring reason for our greater effort. Shall we continue that effort after victory has come? We can not tell. We do not know how the reaction will affect us.

Digitized by Google

Take away our object, take away our inspiration, remove us from the second line, and it is hard to tell what the result may be. For now, in the moment of need we are what we are.

Appearance? Yes; there were those who cried out at the sight of women in trousers—in overalls. I can talk of worse as to appearance. Come with me a moment and I will show you girls jaundiced, yellowed to a saffron shade—their good looks gone forever or for these many years, their faces a mask, their hands repulsive claws. What is it—why is it?

Only lyddite workers, only girls who breath the fumes of picric acid, only "privates" in the second line of defence, only women who will tell you " 'E's gone to France, my Jim is"—or "My husband is Colonel —— in command of —— Company"—only girls who are risking their all cheerfully, who talk in a rough, husky voice for the picric acid fumes affect the mucous membranes of the throat, and have sometimes deadly effect on kidneys and nerve centers.

These are the things English women, French women have been doing during four years "for him."

Digitized by Google

And he—when he returns and finds his girl an ugly shadow of her once pretty self—will he desert her for some attractive nymph employed at less exacting toil? Not he. Tommy Atkins, whether he was one of the old "contemptibles," those game one hundred thousand almost annihilated, whether he was a Territorial lad pledged for home service and volunteering for front line action, or whether he was one of "Kitchener's Mob," Tommy admires pluck—so does brother Jack, above all things, pluck. They honor the girls they call "canaries."

Little "canary" with the husky note and tarnished plumage, fit mate for a fighting man. "Quits" is the cry when we size up the giving of both for Liberty.

There is the forlorn little war widow. I have watched her still a bride, wave farewell to her husband—choke back her tears—tighten her white lips, then turn to answer the call that is bred in British hearts—the call of honest work. I have seen her a bride no longer, I have seen her sob out her heart while my own tears blinded my eyes, then I have heard her whisper "I must go on—some other boy will need an

Digitized by Google

extra shell to avenge my Jim—I must go on." And she goes on. Her motto *noblesse oblige.*

Yes; in our hearts, we of the second line, there is some bitterness and there is vengeance. "Vengeance is mine," hath said the Lord of Hosts, yet may it not be that the Lord chooses instruments of vengeance for the wreaking of His just wrath? Surely the just anger of our outraged love shall not be held against us.

There is the main reason for our work, our success. To-day everything, with time, has become easy to us; to-day, the fever of work is gripping us for work's sake, to-day, we are toiling for the sake of our own and our daughters' economic independence. We are toiling for the safety of our world.

It is a wonderful feeling—it is our recognition as workers in the hive, while still reserved to us is the queenship of our eternal womanhood.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIII

FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE AND AFTERWARD

"IF THIS war only lasts another year, I'll be on my feet!" It was 1915 and it was Mrs. Joe Green who spoke. Now Mrs. Joe was a fond wife this fifteen years and a good mother, but a human woman. Financially in all of fourteen of those years she had been precariously standing on a crater edge of debt; oftentimes "Uncle," otherwise a pawnshop, had saved her from toppling over. Mrs. Green possessed a pair of brass candlesticks: "Me mother's before me and hers before that, let alone how long before that!" These with due regularity came and went "where the ivy clingeth," "up the spout"—still further renditions of the word pawned in Mrs. Green's phraseology.

Joe was a day laborer before the war. Once for a mad month he had earned thirty shillings a week. That was in the first year of their married life. Then work failed or Joe got lazy

Digitized by Google

again and the family income descended to its accustomed level of one pound per.

Miriam came the first year, followed by Joe Junior, then the twins, Katy and James, Vincent followed and Harry Jack didn't delay long after. Mrs. Green never could "get ahead" of herself. Small wonder, poor woman.

Feed and clothe yourself, feed, clothe and rear six healthy youngsters, feed, clothe and give pocket-money to a husky man with a prodigious appetite, which he could not help, on five dollars a week—it is a feat. Even in pre-war days, Mrs. Green barely did it, eked out by occasional days of "charing," and more occasional days of "washing."

Joe, being neither a drinker nor a slacker, went to war. In 1915 his pay was roughly twenty-five cents per day—the true Englishman, though no more than a day laborer fights for England, not cash; he strikes for world Liberty, not wages. Joe's separation allowance was for his wife twelve shillings and sixpence per week, two and sixpence for the first child and probably one and sixpence for each other child.

Digitized by Google

Joe was a good husband; he allotted a generous half of his munificent recompense to his Missus. She was overwhelmed. Never before in her life had she seen so much money "let alone handlin' it every week."

Then the call for women workers came. Mrs. Green heard the call. She went into a munition plant—it happened to be near her home. She learned quickly and her weekly pay envelope sometimes held as much as one pound fifteen shillings.

Perhaps there are those who will say she neglected her children. Was it neglect when Mrs. Green went charing and left them a full day alone to play on the street and filch a crust from the wall cupboard at dinner time?

To-day, Mrs. Green goes to work and brings the baby with her. She puts him in the factory crèche. There he is attended by volunteer nurses under the charge of a trained nurse. He is fed and kept clean, amused if he is old enough for amusement. If his mother nurses him, she comes at the stated hours and attends to his want. When the shift leaves work, she picks up her baby and goes home. Meanwhile the

Digitized by Google

other children have been to school, they have had their dinners at the school mess-room, they have played, under supervision, in the school yard. And Mrs. Green herself has had adequate food at the factory canteen at a nominal price—being a munition worker and requiring additional energy, she is allowed something a little over the usual food allowance of the ordinary civilian. From the canteen, too, she can carry home a well cooked nourishing dinner for the family, or she can go to the community kitchen of her neighborhood and have a meal prepared there. Her housekeeping is reduced to practically nothing. She attends to the small amount of it with a cheerful spirit, and no longer are the children irritatingly reactive to the mother's frayed nerves, outcome of her overworked, underfed body.

Then there was Mrs. Nolan. Her Irish husband was a street-car conductor in Glasgow, with a weekly wage of twenty-seven shillings. Mrs. Nolan managed her two-roomed residence, fed, clothed and paid rent for herself, himself, and three small Nolans, all out of one pound seven. She had an elderly relative, too, who at

Digitized by Google

times was glad of a meal. Nolan joined up. The car company paid his wife half his wage each week, the government paid her the twelve shilling and sixpence separation allowance for herself and somewhere around seven shilling and sixpence a week for the children. Mrs. Nolan, like Mrs. Green, never had had so much money before. Remember there was one mouth less to feed and that a man's, neither had she to supply him with pocket money—rather, out of his shilling per day (this was before the increase in army pay) he allotted her a possible dollar a week.

The car company fell short of labor. They advertised for women conductors and gave the preference to widows and wives of employees overseas. Mrs. Nolan became a conductor at twenty-seven shillings a week herself; her elderly relative delightfully gave up precarious charing and "minded" the children.

Perhaps Mrs. Nolan lost her head, perhaps she should have been censured, perhaps she was giving way to a craving of refinement, a desire for better things denied her all these years. Mrs. Nolan handled her first week's independent

Digitized by Google

income. She went straightway and bought herself a black silk gown! Extravagance? Yes, maybe it was. Vanity? Possibly. But don't you see the sheer human feminine nature of the thing?

The next week found the Nolans migrating to a roomy four-roomed apartment as against the two rooms of previous days. The following month saw the first instalment paid on a piano and the piano in the front room. Mrs. Nolan could not play, nor Nolan, nor yet the elderly relative, but "he" had always wanted a piano and Emma Jane, aged twelve, was already "taking" lessons. Imagine the surprised delight of Nolan on his first leave, imagine his renewed admiration for the "old woman" in her new black silk. Imagine his pleasure in the bank book which shows a record of War Saving Certificates (Stamps) against the probable rainy day of his return incapacitated from the front, the small nest egg which will be the capital of the little business he will conduct when victory comes. Imagine his pleasure in the happier, healthier, better clothed children. Imagine the rejuvenation of love, frayed and tattered as it

Digitized by Google

had been, in the weary, sogging fight for mere existence in pre-war days.

And when victory and consequent peace does come, is Mrs. Nolan going back to the two rooms, is she going back to the apportioning of twenty-seven shillings per week? Is she going to discard her black silk frock and all it means to her in uplift of pride in herself? Is she going to smother her children, herself and her husband in another two rooms; is she going to turn out the elderly relative?

Are any of the women who have worked—who have found economic independence—are any going to return to the old ways?

I do not think so.

There is a readjustment and a reconstruction here, vaster, if possible, than the readjustment of the fighting man to civilian life. Who is going to organise it?

"The trend is to destroy home life"—the argument has been advanced to me these many times. In a certain section of society I can not see that it will. There has not been a great deal of home life in the poorer habitations at any time. We want some solution to bring the tired

Digitized by Google

women up from the slough of jagged nerves, undernourished tissues and stultified, even atrophied brain power.

The solution appears to me in a more definite organisation of the system under which the Mrs. Nolans and Mrs. Greens of war time, work. By the non-system of pre-war days, their work was never ending. No eight hours ever marked the labor limit of the housewife. No woman ever wanted or will want an eight hour limit on the charge of her offspring, but it is her right to have a limit set on the eternal grind of washing, sweeping, dusting, cooking and washing again.

New Zealand, a country of women voters, has become as nearly idealistic in her working arrangements as can be expected on an earthly existence.

American women with a *Federal and State vote,* British women with an Imperial and provincial vote should do no less.

There is the readjustment of the woman worker whom we have formerly designated as middle class. Some of these women are tasting financial independence for the first time, some are giving their energies to war work of vari-

Digitized by Google

ous kinds—all have realised that housekeeping and child rearing can be so regulated as to allow of outside interest, interests which do not take away from the child, but add so to the mother's own development that she is a broader, deeper, more intelligent guide for the young mind than ever she could have been before.

What of her? Is she going back to the seclusion of the house, or is she to continue to widen the confines of home by bringing the sorrow and gladnesses of humanity to the family circle?

What of the girl whose outlook on life had been probable marriage? In Britain—England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales—there are, roughly, ten women to every man. In Britain there are ten million dependent widows, mothers and children on the government pension list. Those are stupendous figures. The majority of these marriageable girls are doing men's work now; they are in munitions or actually in the women's army.

What of their future? They must live. They must work—at what can they work when their war occupation is gone? These girls and war widows are too busy now to think of their

Digitized by Google

future. Some one should organise for them. I believe that it is to the women of America we must look for this solution.

Over here not so many women are compelled to work at war labor as yet. The basis of needed organisation is at hand in the Women's Clubs. To the women of these societies I would appeal, I would ask the various Federations of Clubs to think out the future of these lonely women—submit schemes, arrange for discussion—help.

In these days of horror, we women of the Allies have learned the sisterhood of sorrow; it is for us now to learn the brotherhood of work.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIV

DAUGHTERS OF COLUMBIA

I HAVE seen America evolve. I have seen America in War. I have seen America develop from indifference to passive interest, from passive interest to interested action, from interested action to enthusiasm, from enthusiasm to serious purpose. I will see America win.

For almost one continuous year I have lived in the States. I have never yet seen in that year the American "of my youth."

How well I remember him and her. Like the average English tourist, they were a thing apart, and they were of two species.

There were those we encountered in the Strand. He, tall, thin, ascetic of face, clean shaven. Suit of darkish grey, the coat mounted on a "rack" of padding before going on the shoulders, a hard straw hat of narrow brim and monstrous crown, and stubbly boots. He rushed madly after nothing, half a length ahead of

Digitized by Google

"her"—"hustling," we presumed. She wore black and white check with a white stock collar, exceedingly good as to cut, neat boots, a nondescript hat of the boat variety, depending therefrom a flowing white lace veil—there were no exceptions, while invariably she muttered on the inconvenience, the discomfort, the *oldness* of our landmarks. The small boy wore a suit from the bale of cloth affected by his mother, his knickers had a fearful and wonderful bagginess pouching over pipe-sticks which were legs; stubbly boots "like Pop's," short socks and a comic hat completed this same small boy who was always good-looking. His sister—sometimes there, sometimes not, arrayed in white, with early Victorian white stockings and black boots—broke the silence of the energetic hustle to plead for iced water. Poor, little girlie, I'm sure she missed the ice-cream and the phosphates, delicious as they are, of her own country.

Then there was the second variety. They walked in groups and showed small inclination to hustle. They were all women and they congregated before brass tablets or stone inlets in the walls of historic buildings; they haunted the

Digitized by Google

Temple, Westminster (mostly Poet's Corner), and St. Paul's, even penetrated to the less well-known haunts of St. Olave's, St. Martin's or St. Barnabas'. They wore stiff white shirt-waists and were found round Bloomsbury at mealtimes and as darkness fell. They were school-teachers over on a special tour.

That was all I knew of American people, with the exception of one or two very pleasant individual and passing acquaintances. Small wonder we knew nothing of our cousins across the pond; small wonder they knew nothing of us, for the English tourist (which includes Irish and Scotch), to all seeming, has been many degrees worse. Small wonder American boys now in England, welcomed with open arms, entertained to the best a limited rationed country can give, are waking to what is truly English, Welsh, Irish and Scotch, small wonder that we who travel from state to state, from San Francisco to New York, from Niagara to Miami, in country town and in city, see with wide open eyes a vast and wonderful land, filled with a large and deep-hearted people.

It was at the Noblesville, Indiana, Chau-

Digitized by Google

tauqua a year ago, that I first saw the true spirit of American women, a spirit which I can only describe by their own word: "lovely." I had spoken, truly I do not know how well or how ill, it was terribly warm and I was travel weary. I left the platform and was surrounded in a moment by kindly women, shaking hands. One old lady came toward me. She was crying, yet a proud smile shone through the tears. Her two boys had gone to camp that very morning.

"You have given me such comfort—such courage." She grasped my hand, then turned away for a moment only to turn back again.

"I wish I could give you something—I so want to give you something." I felt a little embarrassed. I did not dare hope before that my words could have meant so much.

Then the dear old lady exclaimed: "Oh, I *have* something to give you!"

She dived into her workbag, fumbled about for a moment, then drew out a huge, golden brown doughnut.

"Here—take this—God bless you and yours!"

I took the doughnut. I felt the tears well into my eyes. She had given me of her best at hand,

Digitized by Google

and she was a noted cook, I learned. Her sons —her nearest and dearest—had gone to fight for me as for her; they had gone to offer their lives for the honor of their women-folk, as my own boy friends had gone long since. What little of comfort, of courage, of sympathy my words had brought her torn heart, was but a drop in the world sacrifice of womanhood.

"Everybody thinks it strange I should want him to go—why, I wouldn't be a regular, sure-enough American if I didn't. Heaven knows it would mean an awful sacrifice to me, but this is no time to be a mollycoddle, I think."

A quotation, this—a quotation from a letter of an American woman, one I am proud to call friend. He, who is to go, her husband—she, who is to be left, one woman, dainty in person, strong in heart—and they, who are also to be left, two babies—girl children, one toddler, one but little more. That is her sacrifice, to give up husband, father, protection — to be a "sure-enough" American.

Just the words of one little woman, from among the thousands. Ah, little sure-enough

Digitized by Google

American, Heaven does know the measure of your sacrifice for God is with you and near you, blessing you, guarding you in this your mighty "bit!"

I like the American woman in her civil life. I admire her tremendously in her organising powers. I like her self-sufficiency, her independence of action, and her dependence for enjoyment and happiness upon her own resources. I like her club life and her women's meetings, yet with the true American woman, home, as with us, comes first.

The American woman in war is no less independent, no less resourceful. She has not had experience—the four years of bitter experience that we of France and Britain have had—but she is buckling the armor with the grim earnestness and the grim determination which mark her men-folk now in France. I have been in Red Cross centres, I have talked with canteen workers and automobile service women; I have visited factories where girls in overalls handled gas masks, loaded trucks or turned lathes with all the skill born of purposeful endeavor. True

Digitized by Google

such service is not so universal as in the old country, but had the necessity arisen, should the necessity arise, American women will not be behind us in the forward race to uphold the lamp of Liberty.

Daughters of Columbia—God bless you all!

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXV

THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONS

"OUT of the Nowhere into the Here"—how little they know—these giant ones of earth. Do they not understand, can they not learn, do their eyes not see, can their hearts not fathom—

I am a Thought, pure as pearl—I am a Dream precious as gold—I am a Hope firm as rock crystal—I—a Baby—am Love materialised.

To us of Britain and of France there is one lingering, agonising question; one fact of which there is no shirking.

We know the flower of our young manhood is gone.

We of Britain have as yet the largest army on the Western Front, and our troops have fought on seventeen other sections of the line in this world war. Of this eight million men, four million, five hundred and thirty thousand

Digitized by Google

are Englishmen, not Irish, nor Scotch, nor Welsh, nor Canadian, nor Anzac—English. One man out of every four males of the population has offered his life for a principle. I am not English, that is why I mention these stupendous figures of my sister country. I am Irish.

Of the First British Expeditionary Force, men of the Regular Army, old country men alone—taking one division only, out of twelve thousand men, two thousand remain—out of four hundred officers there are fifty. We have had in one month of 1917 twenty-seven thousand men *killed.*

These figures which I quote are official and they are not quoted as a boast of what we have done to save ourselves and save the world. If I wished to boast, there are figures greater, inconceivable, of man power and money power thrown into the whirlpool of war by my own Empire. We do not boast. I quote these figures so that my fellow women may pause and consider the future of the nations.

America, thank God, can not lose so many of her young men. Germany now, though strong,

Digitized by Google

is not in the first flush of her gigantic power. America will not fight with odds of five men to her one and no one to back her up. To-day in the four years of fighting gone by, we have built up a trench system, we have improved upon and remodelled it from the days men lay behind a sandbag breastwork and ate, slept, froze, died in a filthy ooze of mud and blood and ice. To-day, with the power of the States behind us, we have guns where before we had no guns, we have ships where before there were few ships. No; I am thankful for the sake of America's mothers and fathers, American boys will not be lost at the same remorseless rate. We are gaining in experience; there should not be so many costly mistakes—mistakes which are inevitable in the initial ordering of such a titanic undertaking.

Nevertheless there is a question for every woman of us to-day.

What of the children?

Children are the mightiest asset of the nations. Conservation of food, conservation of cash—yes; all necessary, all vital to victory, but

Digitized by Google

it is the children who must be protected, cared for, guided and fitted for the more strenuous life which victory will necessitate.

Women—in our hands and in ours alone lies the future of the world; in our keeping is the manhood of the nation. Aye, women, in the hollow of our hands we hold the lives of the unborn generations who will one day rule this country in the very principles for which our boys—your boys, your husbands, sons, brothers —are giving their lives to-day—the principles of Right, of Liberty, of Love.

A task, a wondrous task this of handling children. Watch the growth of the children and watch the growth of your country, it is one and the same thing.

"Women are not fit to vote; women are not fit to have a say in the affairs of the country," prehistoric man has said, yet he reckoned woman's place as mistress of his home; he counted her fit as wife, fit as mother of children, fit as guide to them in the most susceptible years of their life. The sun of prehistoric man's day has set.

We in Britain—I, myself—have seen the tor-

Digitized by Google

tured babies of France and Belgium. Little mites of humanity staring stonily from eyes glazed with fear, eyes like dull lanterns sunk in black sockets showing ghastly in white masks which should have been a baby face, rounded, rosy, full, smiling, pouting, gay with life and health.

Not so. Kultur had torn the infant from the mother's breast; Kultur had murdered the child not yet able to run to shelter; Kultur had mutilated, outraged, torn, starved. Tiny stumps ended the little sticks of arms, worse things yet were done which official records only can print. How often I have turned away my head for the very heartbreak of the sight as I passed the Refugee Clearing Station at the old Aldwych skating rink. I remember them the day before the air raid which burned the rink down, before the bomb fell which destroyed even the pitiful bundles they had rescued, the poor residue of homes.

I have seen them, women with babies in arms, women dressed in old gowns we had gathered from generous homes, women dazed with sorrow, shocked into idiocy almost, by the horror

Digitized by Google

they had glimpsed. Children hanging to their skirts, children too scared to cry, too pitifully weak to whimper. I have seen women shrink at sound of a sudden voice even though the tone was kind, I have heard a child scream at the honk of a passing motor.

It was the sight of these refugees which made many of our women think of our own children. The Children's Aid Commission was formed, the one-time suffragettes organised milk depots and so forth, added efforts were made to stimulate interest in various child charities already in existence. The new interest in war tended to the forgetting of these long established reliefs. Investigations were made, statistics taken, figures verified. More babies were dying of what I may call our neglect each year in our large cities than ever the Hun in all his wrath had killed from his assaults by air. We women were killing them through indifference—lack of fresh air, overcrowding, undernourished mothers, uneducated mothers, wrong feeding, lack of milk, lack of ice in summer, lack of coal in winter. We were responsible.

Children over here die also of neglect. It is

Digitized by Google

not in one land alone. I know. I have seen figures and heard facts. Is this to continue? Are we going to sit by and let countless mothers go through countless months of waiting, through countless hours of anguish—for what—a moment of joy, a tiny white coffin, a little mound of clay?

I have had it argued to me that Britain was flooded with "War Babies." The percentage of illegitimate children in Britain has always been small. Since 1914 the birth of illegitimate children has decreased by some four per cent. England is not the home of decadent rascality. It has been said in my hearing by a supposedly intelligent woman, that every man returning from overseas would be a social menace. I can not understand such a deliberate insult to the fine mothers of a fine race. I only hope it was the thoughtless repetition of some subtle German propaganda. Soldiers can get into mischief more easily round their own home towns than in France or England to-day.

The women, the thinking women, are too aware of the future of the old country to slacken for a moment the watchfulness they

Digitized by Google

have established. War babies—we don't want war babies, poor mites, in the usual sense in which the term is used, but we do want our nation rebuilt. We can not have recourse to the disgraceful methods of Hunnism to make good the ravages of war—but, in the old country, in this country, we call on every married woman to do her duty. Are we to remain idle, self-indulgent—are we to be slackers and watch our country creep toward a precipice of eternal extinction? The sole charge is with us; on our head lies the obligation and the honor. We are responsible to the country of our birth, of our adoption, we are responsible to the fathers who have offered their lives for our safety, to the fathers who are bringing us peace. We are responsible to the memory of our ancestors, we are responsible to God Almighty for the earthly keeping of the eternal souls entrusted to our care.

Children are the pivot of the world's axis. They are the living, breathing essence of love—love of man and woman, love of woman and man. The very foundation of the country must rock if the children are not conserved.

Digitized by Google

And we women, we who bear the days of waiting, the mental anguish, the physical torture of bringing souls to earth, it is to us that the world looks for the training of the child. Our responsibility only begins when torture ends.

The little creatures of to-day are a charge as never before. They have a heritage of sorrow. Oh, sister women, you who have suffered by war, you who know, give the children of the happiest and best. Let us but put away our own anxieties and dreads, worries and troubles for the sake of the young lives around us.

To-day there is abroad the military spirit—the spirit of fight and might. How can we guide the young mind to know that the unreasoning use of force is wrong, when all around are evidences that the proper use of force is right? How is the child mind to grasp the meaning—the significance of such an anomaly.

Women, the task is in our hands. Let the men help—ah, yes, let them help all they can, but when father is fighting is not the eternal question, "Mother—why?"

Women, there must be no more war.

Digitized by Google

Are you going to have your daughter go through the agony of dread and sorrow and anguished yearning you have borne? Are you going to have your son mutilated; are you going to have your daughter's son thrown, a torn mass of bleeding tissue—awful, quivering fodder for relentless cannon—are you?

Men will fight for the victory which will bring peace on earth. We women must concentrate, must work, must pray, that peace remains. How can we give account to the children if we do not prevail?

All through the ages there comes to women the echo of that cry—Mother, why? Mother, why? The whimper of the babe in the cradle, the cooing voice of the toddler, the maturer tones of the teen age boy and girl—Mother, why —Mother, why?

Women's war work has been strenuous, hard, self-sacrificing, yet women's war work is only commencing. Realise, my sister women, realise your obligation before it is too late. The nation depends on us. Ours is the sublime task —ours the embodiment of recreation, ours to guard the lives of tiny mortals less fitly born

Digitized by Google

than others. Ours to wield the sceptre of supreme command, ours to wear the crown of pain, the diadem of joy, ours to throw protecing arms around the quivering, tortured nation which is the birthright of our people; ours to rise by the gleaming footstool of sacrifice and service to the golden throne of all love and happiness—the throne of Motherhood.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVI

PRIVATE HAROLD R. PEAT

I married him.

Digitized by Google

Her husband

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

A PAGE OF HINTS

Don't worry.

Smile.

Work.

Play sometimes.

Write often.

Never wear black.

Visualise your boy as well, strong, happy.

If he be wounded, see him recovering; see him cared for; see him surrounded with kindness—for all this is so. If he "goes West," see him as a Soul released in Glory—for this is certain.

Think positively—negatively never.

Cooperate with your fellow woman, with your country.

Concentrate on the end which is Victory.

Find courage in the courage of your boy.

Conserve in all things.

Pray often.

Pray fervently.

Pray with abiding Faith.

The Power which is within you wills it thus.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google